A VINDICATION OF SOME PASSAGES IN THE Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters OF THE HISTORY of the DECLINE and FALL of the ROMAN EMPIRE.

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Gibbon (Edward) R
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SOME PASSAGES

IN THE

Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters

OF THE

HISTORY of the DECLINE and FALL of the ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY THE AUTHOR.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. STRAHAN; AND T. CADELL,
IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXIX.

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PERHAPS it may be neceſſary to inform the Public, that not long ſince an Examination of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was publiſhed by Mr. Davis. He ſtyles himſelf a Bachelor of Arts, and a Member of Baliol College in the Univerſity of Oxford. His title-page is a declaration of war, and in the proſecution of his religious cruſade, he aſſumes a privilege of diſregarding the ordinary laws which are reſpected in the moſt hoſtile tranſactions between civilized men or civilized nations. Some of the harſheſt epithets in the Engliſh language are repeatedly applied to the hiſtorian, a part

of whoſe work Mr. Davis has choſen for the object of his criticiſm. To this author Mr. Davis imputes the crime of betraying the confidence and ſeducing the faith of thoſe readers, who may heedleſsly ſtray in the flowery paths of his diction, without perceiving the poiſonous ſnake that lurks concealed in the graſs. *Latet anguis in herbâ.* The Examiner has aſſumed the province of reminding them of "the unfair "proceedings of ſuch an inſidious friend, who "offers the deadly draught in a golden cup, "that they may be leſs ſenſible of the danger[1]. "In order to which, Mr. Davis has ſelected "ſeveral of the more notorious inſtances of his "miſrepreſentations and errors; reducing them "to their reſpective heads, and ſubjoining a "long liſt of almoſt incredible inaccuracies: "and ſuch ſtriking proofs of ſervile plagiariſm, "as the world will be ſurpriſed to meet with "in an author who puts in ſo bold a claim to "originality and extenſive reading[2]?" Mr. Davis proſecutes this attack through an octavo volume of not leſs than two hundred and eighty-four pages with the ſame implacable ſpirit; perpetually charges his adverſary with perverting the ancients, and tranſcribing the moderns; and, inconſiſtently enough, imputes to him the oppoſite crimes of art and careleſſneſs, of groſs

[1] Davis, Preface, p. ii. [2] Ibid. Preface, p. iii.

ignorance

ignorance and of wilful falſehood. The Examiner cloſes his work [3] with a ſevere reproof of thoſe feeble critics who have allowed any ſhare of knowledge to an odious antagoniſt. He preſumes to pity and to condemn the firſt hiſtorian of the preſent age, for the generous approbation which he had beſtowed on a writer who is content that Mr. Davis ſhould be his enemy, whilſt he has a right to name Dr. Robertſon for his friend.

When I delivered to the world the Firſt Volume of an important Hiſtory, in which I had been obliged to connect the progreſs of Chriſtianity with the civil ſtate and revolutions of the Roman Empire, I could not be ignorant that the reſult of my inquiries might offend the intereſt of ſome and the opinions of others. If the whole work was favourably received by the Public, I had the more reaſon to expect that this obnoxious part would provoke the zeal of thoſe who conſider themſelves as the Watchmen of the Holy City. Theſe expectations were not diſappointed; and a fruitful crop of Anſwers, Apologies, Remarks, Examinations, &c. ſprung up with all convenient ſpeed. As ſoon as I ſaw the advertiſement, I generally ſent for them; for I have never affected, indeed I have never underſtood, the

[3] Davis, p. 282, 283.

ſtoical apathy, the proud contempt of criticiſm, which ſome authors have publicly profeſſed. Fame is the motive, it is the reward, of our labours; nor can I eaſily comprehend how it is poſſible that we ſhould remain cold and indifferent with regard to the attempts which are made to deprive us of the moſt valuable object of our poſſeſſions, or at leaſt of our hopes. Beſides this ſtrong and natural impulſe of curioſity, I was prompted by the more laudable deſire of applying to my own, and the public, benefit, the well-grounded cenſures of a learned adverſary; and of correcting thoſe faults which the indulgence of vanity and friendſhip had ſuffered to eſcape without obſervation. I read with attention ſeveral criticiſms which were publiſhed againſt the Two laſt Chapters of my Hiſtory, and unleſs I much deceive myſelf, I weighed them in my own mind without prejudice and without reſentment. After I was clearly ſatisfied that their principal objections were founded on miſrepreſentation or miſtake, I declined with ſincere and diſintereſted reluctance the odious taſk of controverſy, and almoſt formed a tacit reſolution of committing my intentions, my writings, and my adverſaries to the judgment of the Public, of whoſe favourable diſpoſition I had received the moſt flattering proofs.

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The reaſons which juſtified my ſilence were obvious and forcible: the reſpectable nature of the ſubject itſelf, which ought not to be raſhly violated by the rude hand of controverſy; the inevitable tendency of diſpute, which ſoon degenerates into minute and perſonal altercation; the indifference of the Public for the diſcuſſion of ſuch queſtions as neither relate to the buſineſs nor the amuſement of the preſent age. I calculated the poſſible loſs of temper and the certain loſs of time, and conſidered, that while I was laboriouſly engaged in a humiliating taſk, which could add nothing to my own reputation, or to the entertainment of my readers, I muſt interrupt the proſecution of a work which claimed my whole attention, and which the Public, or at leaſt my friends, ſeemed to require with ſome impatience at my hands. The judicious lines of Dr. Young ſometimes offered themſelves to my memory, and I felt the truth of his obſervation, That every author lives or dies by his own pen, and that the unerring ſentence of Time aſſigns its proper rank to every compoſition and to every criticiſm, which it preſerves from oblivion.

I ſhould have conſulted my own eaſe, and perhaps I ſhould have acted in ſtricter conformity to the rules of prudence, if I had ſtill perſevered in patient ſilence. But Mr. Davis may, if he pleaſes, aſſume the merit of extorting

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ing from me the notice which I had refuſed to more honourable foes. I had declined the conſideration of their *literary Objections*, but he has compelled me to give an anſwer to his *criminal Accuſations*. Had he confined himſelf to the ordinary, and indeed obſolete charges of impious principles, and miſchievous intentions, I ſhould have acknowledged with readineſs and pleaſure that the religion of Mr. Davis appeared to be very different from mine. Had he contented himſelf with the uſe of that ſtyle which decency and politeneſs have baniſhed from the more liberal part of mankind, I ſhould have ſmiled, perhaps with ſome contempt, but without the leaſt mixture of anger or reſentment. Every animal employs the note, or cry, or howl, which is peculiar to its ſpecies; every man expreſſes himſelf in the dialect the moſt congenial to his temper and inclination, the moſt familiar to the company in which he has lived, and to the authors with whom he is converſant; and while I was diſpoſed to allow that Mr. Davis had made ſome proficiency in Eccleſiaſtical Studies, I ſhould have conſidered the difference of our language and manners as an unſurmountable bar of ſeparation between us. Mr. Davis has overleaped that bar, and forces me to contend with him on the very dirty ground which he has choſen for the ſcene of

our

our combat. He has judged, I know not with how much propriety, that the ſupport of a cauſe, which would diſclaim ſuch unworthy aſſiſtance, depended on the ruin of my moral and literary character. The different miſrepreſentations, of which he has drawn out the ignominious catalogue, would materially affect my credit as an hiſtorian, my reputation as a ſcholar, and even my honour and veracity as a gentleman. If I am indeed incapable of underſtanding what I read, I can no longer claim a place among thoſe writers who merit the eſteem and confidence of the Public. If I am capable of wilfully perverting what I underſtand, I no longer deſerve to live in the ſociety of thoſe men, who conſider a ſtrict and inviolable adherence to truth, as the foundation of every thing that is virtuous or honourable in human nature. At the ſame time, I am not inſenſible that his mode of attack has given a tranſient pleaſure to my enemies, and a tranſient uneaſineſs to my friends. The ſize of his volume, the boldneſs of his aſſertions, the acrimony of his ſtyle, are contrived with tolerable ſkill to confound the ignorance and candour of his readers. There are few who will examine the truth or juſtice of his accuſations; and of thoſe perſons who have been directed by their education to the ſtudy of eccleſiaſtical antiquity,

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many will believe, or will affect to believe, that the ſucceſs of their champion has been equal to his zeal, and that the *ſerpent* pierced with an hundred wounds lies expiring at his feet. Mr. Davis's book *will* ceaſe to be read (perhaps the grammarians may already reproach me for the uſe of an *improper* tenſe); but the oblivion towards which it ſeems to be haſtening, will afford the more ample ſcope for the artful practices of thoſe, who may not ſcruple to affirm, or rather to inſinuate, that Mr. Gibbon was publickly convicted of falſehood and miſrepreſentation; that the evidence produced againſt him was unanſwerable; and that his ſilence was the effect and the proof of conſcious guilt. Under the hands of a malicious ſurgeon, the ſting of a waſp may continue to feſter and inflame, long after the vexatious little inſect has left its venom and its life in the wound.

The defence of my own honour is undoubtedly the firſt and prevailing motive which urges me to repel with vigour an unjuſt and unprovoked attack; and to undertake a tedious vindication, which, after the perpetual repetition of the vaineſt and moſt diſguſting of the pronouns, will only prove that *I* am innocent; and that Mr. Davis, in his charge, has very frequently ſubſcribed his

own condemnation. And yet I may preſume to affirm, that the Public have ſome intereſt in this controverſy. They have ſome intereſt to know, whether the writer whom they have honoured with their favour is deſerving of their confidence, whether they muſt content themſelves with reading the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire as a *tale amuſing enough*, or whether they may venture to receive it as a fair and authentic hiſtory. The general perſuaſion of mankind, that where *much* has been poſitively aſſerted, *ſomething* muſt be true, may contribute to encourage a ſecret ſuſpicion, which would naturally diffuſe itſelf over the whole body of the work. Some of thoſe friends who may now tax me with imprudence for taking this public notice of Mr. Davis's book, have perhaps already condemned me for ſilently acquieſcing under the weight of ſuch ſerious, ſuch direct, and ſuch circumſtantial imputations.

Mr. Davis, who in the laſt page of his [4] Work appears to have recollected that modeſty is an amiable and uſeful qualification, affirms, that his plan required only that he ſhould conſult the authors to whom he was directed by my references; and that the judgment of riper

[4] Davis, p. 284.

years was not ſo neceſſary to enable him to execute with ſucceſs the pious labour to which he had devoted his pen. Perhaps, before we ſeparate, a moment to which I moſt fervently aſpire, Mr. Davis may find that a mature judgment is indiſpenſably requiſite for the ſucceſsful execution of *any* work of literature, and more eſpecially of criticiſm. Perhaps he will diſcover, that a young ſtudent, who haſtily conſults an unknown author, on a ſubject with which he is unacquainted, cannot always be guided by the moſt accurate reference to the knowledge of the ſenſe, as well as to the ſight of the paſſage which has been quoted by his adverſary. Abundant proofs of theſe maxims will hereafter be ſuggeſted. For the preſent, I ſhall only remark, that it is my intention to purſue in my defence the order, or rather the courſe, which Mr. Davis has marked out in his Examination; and that I have numbered the ſeveral articles of my impeachment according to the moſt natural diviſion of the ſubject. And now let me proceed on this hoſtile march over a dreary and barren deſert, where thirſt, hunger, and intolerable wearineſs, are much more to be dreaded, than the arrows of the enemy.

I. " The

I.

"The remarkable mode of quotation which "Mr. Gibbon adopts, muſt immediately ſtrike "every one who turns to his notes. He ſome- "times only mentions the author, perhaps the "book; and often leaves the reader the toil "of finding out, or rather gueſſing at the paſ- "ſage. The policy, however, is not without "its deſign and uſe. By endeavouring to de- "prive us of the means of comparing him with "the authorities he cites, he flattered himſelf, "no doubt, that he might ſafely have recourſe "to *miſrepreſentation*[5]." Such is the ſtyle of Mr. Davis; who in another place[6] mentions this mode of quotation "as a good artifice to "eſcape detection;" and applauds, with an agreeable irony, his own labours in turning over a *few* pages of the Theodoſian Code. QUOTATIONS IN GENERAL.

I ſhall not deſcend to animadvert on the rude and illiberal ſtrain of this paſſage, and I will frankly own that my indignation is loſt in aſtoniſhment. The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of my Hiſtory are illuſtrated by three hundred and eighty-three Notes; and the nakedneſs of a few Notes, which are not accompanied by any quotation, is amply compenſated by a much greater number, which contain two, three, or perhaps four diſtinct

[5] Davis, Preface, p. ii. [6] Id. p. 230.

 references;

references; ſo that upon the whole my ſtock of quotations which ſupport and juſtify my facts cannot amount to leſs than eight hundred or a thouſand. As I had often felt the inconvenience of the looſe and general method of quoting which is ſo falſely imputed to me, I have carefully diſtinguiſhed the *books*, the *chapters*, the *ſections*, the *pages* of the authors to whom I referred, with a degree of accuracy and attention, which might claim ſome gratitude, as it has ſeldom been ſo regularly practiſed by any hiſtorical writers. And here I muſt confeſs ſome obligation to Mr. Davis, who, by ſtaking my credit and his own on a circumſtance ſo obvious and palpable, has given me this early opportunity of ſubmitting the merits of our cauſe, or at leaſt of our characters, to the judgment of the Public. Hereafter, when I am ſummoned to defend myſelf againſt the imputation of miſquoting the text, or miſrepreſenting the ſenſe of a Greek or Latin author, it will not be in my power to communicate the knowledge of the languages, or the poſſeſſion of the books, to thoſe readers who may be deſtitute either of one or of the other, and the part which *they* are obliged to take between aſſertions equally ſtrong and peremptory, may ſometimes be attended with doubt and heſitation. But, in the preſent inſtance,

ſtance, every reader who will give himſelf the trouble of conſulting the Firſt Volume of my Hiſtory, is a competent judge of the queſtion. I exhort, I ſolicit him to run his eye down the columns of Notes, and to count *how many* of the quotations are minute and particular, *how few* are vague and general. When he has ſatisfied himſelf by this eaſy computation, there *is* a word which may naturally ſuggeſt itſelf; an epithet, which I ſhould be ſorry either to deſerve or uſe; the boldneſs of Mr. Davis's aſſertion, and the confidence of my appeal, will tempt, nay, perhaps, will force him to apply that epithet either to one or to the other of the adverſe parties.

I have confeſſed that a critical eye may diſcover *ſome* looſe and general references; but as they bear a very *inconſiderable* proportion to the whole maſs, they cannot ſupport, or even excuſe, a falſe and ungenerous accuſation, which muſt reflect diſhonour either on the object or on the author of it. If the examples in which I have occaſionally deviated from my ordinary practice were ſpecified and examined, I am perſuaded that they might always be fairly attributed to one of the following reaſons. 1. In ſome *rare* inſtances, which I have never attempted to conceal, I have been obliged to adopt quotations which were expreſſed with leſs accuracy than I could have wiſhed. 2. I may have accidentally recollected the ſenſe of a

paſſage which I had formerly read, without being able to find the place, or even to tranſcribe from memory the preciſe words. 3. The whole tract (as in a remarkable inſtance of the ſecond Apology of Juſtin Martyr) was ſo ſhort, that a more particular deſcription was not required. 4. The form of the compoſition ſupplied the want of a local reference; the preceding mention of the *year* fixed the paſſage of the annaliſt; and the reader was guided to the proper ſpot in the commentaries of Grotius, Valeſius, or Godefroy, by the more accurate citation of their original author. 5. The idea which I was deſirous of communicating to the reader, was ſometimes the general reſult of the author or treatiſe that I had quoted; nor was it poſſible to confine, within the narrow limits of a particular reference, the ſenſe or ſpirit which was mingled with the whole maſs. Theſe motives are either laudable, or at leaſt innocent. In two of theſe exceptions, my ordinary mode of citation was ſuperfluous; in the other three, it was impracticable.

In quoting a compariſon which Tertullian had uſed to expreſs the rapid increaſe of the Marcionites, I expreſsly declared that I was obliged to quote it from memory[7]. If I have been guilty of comparing them to *bees* inſtead of *waſps*, I can however moſt ſincerely diſclaim

[7] Gibbon's Hiſtory, p. 551. I ſhall uſually refer to the third edition, unleſs there are any various readings.

the

the ſagacious ſuſpicion of Mr. Davis[8], who imagines that I was tempted to amend the ſimile of Tertullian from an improper partiality for thoſe odious Heretics.

A reſcript of Diocletian, which declared *the* old law (not *an* old law[9]), had been alleged by me on the reſpectable authority of Fra-Paolo. The Examiner, who thinks that he has turned over the pages of the Theodoſian Code, informs[1] his reader that it may be found, l. vi. tit. xxiv. leg. 8.; he will be ſurpriſed to learn that this reſcript could not be *found* in a code where it does not exiſt, but that it may diſtinctly be read in the ſame number, the ſame title, and the ſame book of the CODE OF JUSTINIAN. He who is ſevere ſhould at leaſt be juſt: yet I ſhould probably have diſdained this minute animadverſion, unleſs it had ſerved to diſplay the general ignorance of the critic in the Hiſtory of the Roman Juriſprudence. If Mr. Davis had not been an abſolute ſtranger, the moſt treacherous guide could not have perſuaded him that a reſcript of Diocletian was to be found in the Theodoſian Code, which was deſigned only to preſerve the laws of Conſtantine and his ſucceſſors. Compendioſam (ſays Theodoſius himſelf) Divalium Conſtitutionum ſcientiam, ex D. Conſtantini temporibus roboramus. (Novell. ad calcem Cod. Theod. l. i. tit. i. leg. 1.)

[8] Davis, p. 144. [9] Gibbon, p. 593. [1] Davis, p. 230.

II. Few

II.

Errors of the Press.

Few objects are below the notice of Mr. Davis, and his criticiſm is never ſo formidable as when it is directed againſt the guilty corrector of the preſs, who on ſome occaſions has ſhewn himſelf negligent of my fame and of his own. Some errors have ariſen from the omiſſion of letters; from the confuſion of cyphers, which perhaps were not very diſtinctly marked in the original manuſcript. The *two* of the Roman, and the *eleven* of the Arabic, numerals have been unfortunately miſtaken for each other; the ſimilar forms of a 2 and a 3, a 5 and a 6, a 3 and an 8, have improperly been tranſpoſed; A*n*tolycus for A*u*tolycus, Idolatria for Ido*l*olatria, Holſte*r*ius for Holſte*n*ius, had eſcaped my own obſervation, as well as the diligence of the perſon who was employed to reviſe the ſheets of my Hiſtory. Theſe important errors, from the indulgence of a deluded Public, have been multiplied in the numerous impreſſions of three different editions; and for the preſent I can only lament my own defects, whilſt I deprecate the wrath of Mr. Davis, who ſeems ready to infer that I cannot either read or write. I ſincerely admire his patient induſtry, which I deſpair of being able to imitate; but if a future edition ſhould ever be required, I could wiſh to obtain, on any reaſonable terms, the ſervices of ſo uſeful a corrector.

III. Mr.

III.

Mr. Davis had been directed by my references to ſeveral paſſages of Optatus Milevitanus [2], and of the Bibliotheque Eccleſiaſtique of M. Dupin [3]. He eagerly conſults thoſe places, is unſucceſsful, and is happy. Sometimes the place which I have quoted does not offer any of the circumſtances which I had alleged, ſometimes only a few; and ſometimes the ſame paſſages exhibit a ſenſe totally adverſe and repugnant to mine. Theſe ſhameful miſrepreſentations incline Mr. Davis to ſuſpect that I have never conſulted the original (not even of a common French book!), and he aſſerts his right to cenſure my preſumption. Theſe important charges form two diſtinct articles in the liſt of *Miſrepreſentations*; but Mr. Davis has amuſed himſelf with adding to the ſlips of the pen or of the preſs, ſome complaints of his ill ſucceſs, when he attempted to verify my quotations from Cyprian and from Shaw's Travels [4].

Difference of Editions.

The ſucceſs of Mr. Davis would indeed have been ſomewhat extraordinary, unleſs he had conſulted the ſame *editions*, as well as the ſame places. I ſhall content myſelf with mention-

[2] Davis, p. 73. [3] Id. p. 132—136. [4] Id. p. 151. 155.

ing the editions which I have uſed, and with aſſuring him, that if he renews his ſearch, he will not, or rather that he will, be diſappointed.

Mr. Gibbon's Editions.	Mr. Davis's Editions.
Optatus Milevitanus, by Dupin, fol. Paris, 1700.	Fol. Antwerp, 1702.
Dupin, Bibliotheque Eccleſiaſtique, 4to. Paris, 1690.	8vo. Paris, 1687.
Cypriani Opera, Edit. Fell, fol. Amſterdam, 1700.	Moſt probably Oxon. 1682.
Shaw's Travels, 4to. London, 1757.	The folio Edition.

IV.

JEWISH HISTORY, TACITUS.

The nature of my ſubject had led me to mention, not the real origin of the Jews, but their firſt *appearance* to the eyes of other nations; and I cannot avoid tranſcribing the ſhort paſſage in which I had introduced them. "The Jews, who under the Aſſyrian and Perſian monarchies had languiſhed for many ages the moſt deſpiſed portion of their ſlaves, emerged from their obſcurity under the ſucceſſors of Alexander. And as they multiplied to a ſurpriſing degree in the Eaſt, and afterwards in the Weſt, they ſoon excited the curioſity and wonder of other nations[5]." This ſimple abridgment ſeems in its turn to have excited the wonder of Mr. Davis, whoſe ſurpriſe almoſt renders him eloquent.

[5] Gibbon, p. 537.

"What

" What a ſtrange aſſemblage," ſays he, " is " here? It is like Milton's Chaos, without " bound, without dimenſion, where time and " place are loſt. In ſhort, what does this diſ- " play afford us, but a deal of boyiſh co- " louring to the prejudice of much good hiſ- " tory [6]?" If I rightly underſtand Mr. Davis's language, he cenſures, as a piece of confuſed declamation, the paſſage which he has produced from my Hiſtory; and if I collect the angry criticiſms which he has ſcattered over twenty pages of controverſy [7], I think I can diſcover that there is hardly a period, or even a word, in this unfortunate paſſage, which has obtained the approbation of the Examiner.

As nothing can eſcape his vigilance, he cenſures me for including the twelve tribes of Iſrael under the common appellation of JEWS [8], and for extending the name of ASSYRIANS to the ſubjects of the Kings of Babylon [9]; and again cenſures me, becauſe ſome facts which are affirmed or inſinuated in my text, do not agree with the ſtrict and proper limits which he has aſſigned to thoſe national denominations. The name of *Jews* has indeed been eſtabliſhed by the ſcepter of the tribe of *Judah*, and, in the times which precede the captivity, it is uſed in the more

[6] Davis, p. 5. [7] Id. p. 2--22. [8] Id. p. 3. [9] Id. p. 2.

general ſenſe with ſome ſort of impropriety; but ſurely I am not peculiarly charged with a fault which has been conſecrated by the conſent of twenty centuries, the practice of the beſt writers, ancient as well as modern (See Joſephus and Prideaux, even in the titles of their reſpective works), and by the uſage of modern languages, of the Latin, the Greek, and, if I may credit Reland, of the Hebrew itſelf (See Paleſtin. l. i. c. 6.). With regard to the other word, that of Aſſyrians, moſt aſſuredly I will not loſe myſelf in the labyrinth of the Aſiatic monarchies before the age of Cyrus; nor indeed is any more required for my juſtification, than to prove that Babylon was conſidered as the capital and royal ſeat of Aſſyria. If Mr. Davis were a man of learning, I might be moroſe enough to cenſure his ignorance of ancient geography, and to overwhelm him under a load of quotations, which might be collected and tranſcribed with very little trouble: But as I *muſt* ſuppoſe that he has received a claſſical education, I might have expected him to have read the firſt book of Herodotus, where that hiſtorian deſcribes, in the cleareſt and moſt elegant terms, the ſituation and greatneſs of Babylon: Της δε Ασσυριης τα μεν κου και αλλα πολισματα μεγαλα πολλα, το δε ονομαστοτατον και ισχυροτατον και ενθα σφι, Νινου

Νινου αναστατου γενομενης, τα βασιληια κατεστηκει, ην Βαβυλων. (Clio, c. 178.) I may be ſurpriſed that he ſhould be ſo little converſant with the Cyropœdia of Xenophon, in the whole courſe of which the King of Babylon, the adverſary of the Medes and Perſians, is repeatedly mentioned by the ſtyle and title of THE ASSYRIAN, Ὁ δε Ασσυριος, ὁ Βαβυλωνα τε ειχων και την αλλην Ασσυριαν. (l. ii. p. 102, 103, Edit. Hutchinſon.) But there remains ſomething more: and Mr. Davis muſt apply the ſame reproaches of *inaccuracy, if not ignorance*, to the Prophet Iſaiah, who, in the name of Jehovah, announcing the downfal of Babylon and the deliverance of Iſrael, declares with an oath; "And as I have purpoſed the thing ſhall ſtand: to cruſh the "ASSYRIAN in my land, and to trample him "on my mountains. Then ſhall his yoke depart from off them; and his burthen ſhall "be removed from off their ſhoulders." (Iſaiah, xiv. 24, 25. Lowth's new tranſlation. See likewiſe the Biſhop's note, p. 98.) Our old tranſlation expreſſes, with leſs elegance, the the ſame meaning; but I mention with pleaſure the labours of a reſpectable Prelate, who in this, as well as in a former work, has very happily united the moſt critical judgment, with the taſte and ſpirit of poetry.

The

The jealouſy which Mr. Davis affects for the honour of the Jewiſh people, will not ſuffer him to allow that they were *ſlaves* to the conquerors of the Eaſt; and while he acknowledges that they were tributary and dependent, he ſeems deſirous of introducing, or even inventing, ſome milder expreſſion of the ſtate of vaſſalage and *ſubſervience*[1]; from whence Tacitus aſſumed the words of *deſpectiſſima pars ſervientium*. Has Mr. Davis never heard of the diſtinction of civil and political ſlavery? Is he ignorant that even the natural and victorious ſubjects of an Aſiatic deſpot have been deſervedly marked with the opprobrious epithet of ſlaves by every writer acquainted with the name and advantage of freedom? Does he not know that, under ſuch a government, the yoke is impoſed with double weight on the necks of the vanquiſhed, as the rigour of tyranny is aggravated by the abuſe of conqueſt. From the firſt invaſion of Judæa by the arms of the Aſſyrians, to the ſubverſion of the Perſian monarchy by Alexander, there elapſed a period of above four hundred years, which included about twelve ages or generations of the human race. As long as the Jews aſſerted their independence, they repeatedly ſuffered every calamity which the rage and inſolence of a vic-

[1] Davis, p. 6.

torious

torious enemy could inflict; the throne of David was overturned, the temple and city were reduced to aſhes, and the whole land, a circumſtance perhaps unparalleled in hiſtory, remained three-ſcore and ten years without inhabitants, and without cultivation. (2 Chronicles, xxxvi. 21.) According to an inſtitution which has long prevailed in Aſia, and particularly in the Turkiſh government, the moſt beautiful and ingenious youths were carefully educated in the palace, where ſuperior merit ſometimes introduced theſe fortunate *ſlaves* to the favour of the conqueror, and to the honours of the ſtate. (See the book and example of Daniel.) The reſt of the unhappy Jews experienced the hardſhips of captivity and exile in diſtant lands, and while individuals were oppreſſed, the nation ſeemed to be diſſolved or annihilated. The gracious edict of Cyrus was offered to all thoſe who worſhipped the God of Iſrael in the temple of Jeruſalem; but it was accepted by no more than forty-two thouſand perſons of either ſex and of every age, and of theſe about thirty thouſand derived their origin from the Tribes of Judah, of Benjamin, and of Levi. (See Ezra, i. Nehemiah, vii. and Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 107. fol. Edit. London, 1718.) The inconſiderable band of exiles, who returned to inhabit the land of their fathers, cannot be

computed as the hundred and fiftieth part of the mighty people that had been numbered by the impious raſhneſs of David. After a ſurvey, which did not comprehend the Tribes of Levi and Benjamin, the monarch was aſſured that he reigned over *one million five hundred and ſeventy thouſand men* that drew ſword (1 Chronicles, xxi. 1—6), and the country of Judæa muſt have contained near ſeven millions of free inhabitants. The progreſs of reſtoration is always leſs rapid than that of deſtruction; Jeruſalem, which had been ruined in a few months, was rebuilt by the ſlow and interrupted labours of a whole century; and the Jews, who gradually multiplied in their native ſeats, enjoyed a ſervile and precarious exiſtence, which depended on the capricious will of their maſter. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah do not afford a very pleaſing view of their ſituation under the Perſian Empire; and the book of Eſther exhibits a moſt extraordinary inſtance of the degree of eſtimation in which they were held at the Court of Suſa. A Miniſter addreſſed his King in the following words, which may be conſidered as a Commentary on the *deſpectiſſima pars ſervientium* of the Roman hiſtorian: "And Haman ſaid to "King Ahaſuerus, There is a certain people "ſcattered abroad, and diſperſed among the "people

" people in all the provinces of thy kingdom;
" and their laws are diverſe from all people,
" neither keep they the King's laws; therefore
" it is not for the King's profit to ſuffer them.
" If it pleaſe the King, let it be written that
" they may be deſtroyed; and I will pay ten
" thouſand talents of ſilver to the hands of
" thoſe that have the charge of the buſineſs, to
" bring it to the King's treaſuries. And the
" king took his ring from his hand, and gave
" it to Haman, the ſon of Hammedatha the
" Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king
" ſaid unto Haman, The ſilver is given unto
" thee; the people alſo, to do with them as
" it ſeemeth good to thee." (Eſther, iii. 8—11.)
This trifling favour was aſked by the Miniſter, and granted by the Monarch, with an eaſy indifference, which expreſſed their contempt for the lives and fortunes of the Jews; the buſineſs paſſed without difficulty through the forms of office; and had Eſther been leſs lovely, or leſs beloved, a ſingle day would have conſummated the univerſal ſlaughter of a ſubmiſſive people, to whom no legal defence was allowed, and from whom no reſiſtance ſeems to have been dreaded. I am a ſtranger to Mr. Davis's political principles; but I ſhould think that the epithet of *ſlaves*, and of *deſpiſed* ſlaves, may, without injuſtice, be applied to a captive na-

tion, over whoſe head the ſword of tyranny was ſuſpended by ſo ſlender a thread.

The policy of the Macedonians was very different from that of the Perſians; and yet Mr. Davis, who reluctantly confeſſes that the Jews were oppreſſed by the former, does not underſtand how long they were favoured and protected by the latter[2]. In the ſhock of thoſe revolutions which divided the empire of Alexander, Judæa, like the other provinces, experienced the tranſient ravages of an advancing or retreating enemy, who led away a multitude of captives. But, in the age of Joſephus, the Jews ſtill enjoyed the privileges granted by the Kings of Aſia and Egypt, who had fixed numerous colonies of that nation in the new cities of Alexandria, Antioch, &c. and placed them in the ſame honourable condition (ισοπολιτας, ισοτιμους) as the Greeks and Macedonians themſelves. (Joſeph. Antiquitat. l. xii. c. 1. 3. p. 585. 596. Vol. i. edit. Havercamp.) Had they been treated with leſs indulgence, their ſettlement in thoſe celebrated cities, the ſeats of commerce and learning, was enough to introduce them to the knowledge of the world, and to juſtify my *abſurd* propoſition, that they emerged from obſcurity under the ſucceſſors of Alexander.

[2] Davis, p. 4.

The

The Jews remained and flouriſhed under the mild dominion of the Macedonian Princes, till they were compelled to aſſert their civil and religious rights againſt Antiochus Epiphanes, who had adopted new maxims of tyranny; and the age of the Maccabees is perhaps the moſt glorious period of the Hebrew annals. Mr. Davis, who on this occaſion is bewildered by the ſubtlety of Tacitus, does not comprehend why the hiſtorian ſhould aſcribe the independence of the Jews to three *negative* cauſes, "Macedonibus invalidis, Parthis nondum adultis, "et Romani procul aberant." To the underſtanding of the critic, Tacitus might as well have obſerved, that the Jews were not deſtroyed by a plague, a famine, or an earthquake; and Mr. Davis cannot ſee, for his own part, any reaſon why they might not have elected Kings of their own two or three hundred years before[3]. Such indeed was not the reaſon of Tacitus: he probably conſidered that every nation, depreſſed by the weight of a foreign power, naturally riſes towards the ſurface, as ſoon as the preſſure is removed; and he might think that, in a ſhort and rapid hiſtory of the independence of the Jews, it was ſufficient for him to ſhew that the obſtacles did not exiſt, which, in an earlier or in a later period,

[3] Davis, p. 8.

would have checked their efforts. The curious reader, who has leiſure to ſtudy the Jewiſh and Syrian hiſtory, will diſcover, that the throne of the Aſmonæan Princes was confirmed by the two great victories of the Parthians over Demetrius Nicator, and Antiochus Sidetes (See Joſeph. Antiquitat. Jud. l. xiii. c. 5, 6. 8, 9. Juſtin, xxxvi. 1. xxxviii. 10. with Uſher and Prideaux, before Chriſt 141 and 130); and the expreſſion of Tacitus, the more cloſely it is examined, will be the more rationally admired.

My Quotations[4] are the object of Mr. Davis's criticiſm[5], as well as the Text of this ſhort, but obnoxious paſſage. He corrects the error of my memory, which had ſuggeſted *ſervitutis* inſtead of *ſervientium*; and ſo natural is the alliance between truth and moderation, that on this occaſion he forgets his character, and candidly acquits me of any malicious deſign to miſrepreſent the words of Tacitus. The other references, which are contained in the firſt and ſecond Notes of my Fifteenth Chapter, are connected with each other, and can only be miſtaken after they have been forcibly ſeparated. The ſilence of Herodotus is a fair evidence of the obſcurity of the Jews, who had eſcaped the eyes of ſo curious a traveller. The Jews are firſt mentioned by Juſtin, when he

[4] Gibbon, p. 537. Note 1, 2. [5] Davis, p. 10, 11. 20.

relates the ſiege of Jeruſalem by Antiochus Sidetes; and the conqueſt of Judæa, by the arms of Pompey, engaged Diodorus and Dion to introduce that ſingular nation to the acquaintance of their readers. Theſe epochs, which are within ſeventy years of each other, mark the age in which the Jewiſh people, emerging from their obſcurity, began to act a part in the ſociety of nations, and to excite the curioſity of the Greek and Roman hiſtorians. For that purpoſe only, I had appealed to the authority of Diodorus Siculus, of Juſtin, or rather of Trogus Pompeius, and of Dion Caſſius. If I had deſigned to inveſtigate the Jewiſh Antiquities, reaſon, as well as faith, muſt have directed my inquiries to the Sacred Books, which, even as human productions, would deſerve to be ſtudied as one of the moſt curious and original monuments of the Eaſt.

I ſtand accuſed, though not indeed by Mr. Davis, for profanely depreciating the *promiſed* Land, as well as the *choſen* People. The Gentleman without a name has placed this charge in the front of his battle[1], and if my memory does not deceive me, it is one of the few remarks in Mr. Apthorpe's book, which have any immediate relation to my Hiſtory. They

[1] Remarks, p. 1.

ſeem

ſeem to conſider in the light of a reproach, and of an unjuſt reproach, the idea which I had given of Paleſtine, as of a territory ſcarcely ſuperior to Wales in extent and fertility [2]; and they ſtrangely convert a geographical obſervation into a theological error. When I recollect that the imputation of a ſimilar error was employed by the implacable Calvin, to precipitate and to juſtify the execution of Servetus, I muſt applaud the felicity of this country, and of this age, which has diſarmed, if it could not mollify, the fierceneſs of eccleſiaſtical criticiſm (See Dictionaire Critique de Chauffepié, tom. iv. p. 223).

As I had compared the narrow extent of Phœnicia and Paleſtine with the important bleſſings which thoſe celebrated countries had diffuſed over the reſt of the earth, their minute ſize became an object not of cenſure but of praiſe.

Ingentes animos angusto in pectore verſant.

The preciſe meaſure of Paleſtine was taken from Templeman's Survey of the Globe: he allows to Wales 7011 ſquare Engliſh miles, to the Morea, or Peloponneſus, 7220, to the Seven United Provinces 7546, and to Judæa or Paleſtine 7600. The difference is not very conſiderable, and if any of theſe countries has

[2] Gibbon, p. 30.

been

been magnified beyond its real ſize, Aſia is more liable than Europe to have been affected by the inaccuracy of Mr. Templeman's maps. To the authority of this modern ſurvey, I ſhall only add the ancient and weighty teſtimony of Jerom, who paſſed in Paleſtine above thirty years of his life. From Dan to Berſhebah, the two fixed and proverbial boundaries of the Holy Land, he reckons no more than one hundred and ſixty miles (Hieronym. ad Dardanum, tom. iii. p. 66), and the breadth of Paleſtine cannot by any expedient be ſtretched to one half of its length (See Reland, Paleſtin. l. ii. c. 5. p. 421).

The degrees and limits of fertility cannot be aſcertained with the ſtrict ſimplicity of geographical meaſures. Whenever we ſpeak of the productions of the earth, in different climates, our ideas muſt be relative, our expreſſions vague and doubtful; nor can we always diſtinguiſh between the gifts of Nature and the rewards of Induſtry. The Emperor Frederick II., the enemy and the victim of the Clergy, is accuſed of ſaying, after his return from his Cruſade, that the God of the Jews would have deſpiſed his promiſed land, if he had once ſeen the fruitful realms of Sicily and Naples (See Giannone Iſtoria Civile del Regno di Napoli, tom. ii. p. 245). This raillery, which

which malice has perhaps falſely imputed to Frederick, is inconſiſtent with truth and piety; yet it muſt be confeſſed, that the ſoil of Paleſtine does not contain that inexhauſtible, and as it were ſpontaneous, principle of fecundity, which, under the moſt unfavourable circumſtance, has covered with rich harveſts the banks of the Nile, the fields of Sicily, or the plains of Poland. The Jordan is the only navigable river of Paleſtine: a conſiderable part of the narrow ſpace is occupied, or rather loſt, in the *Dead Sea*, whoſe horrid aſpect inſpires every ſenſation of diſguſt, and countenances every tale of horror. The diſtricts which border on Arabia partake of the ſandy quality of the adjacent deſert. The face of the country, except the ſea-coaſt and the valley of the Jordan, is covered with mountains, which appear for the moſt part as naked and barren rocks; and in the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem there is a real ſcarcity of the two elements of earth and water (See Maundrel's Travels, p. 65, and Reland Paleſtin. tom. i. p. 238—395). Theſe diſadvantages, which now operate in their fulleſt extent, were formerly corrected by the labours of a numerous people, and the active protection of a wiſe government. The hills were clothed with rich beds of artificial mould, the rain was collected in vaſt ciſterns, a ſup-

ply

ply of freſh water was conveyed by pipes and aqueducts to the dry lands, the breed of cattle was encouraged in thoſe parts which were not adapted for tillage, and almoſt every ſpot was compelled to yield ſome production for the uſe of the inhabitants. (See the ſame teſtimonies and obſervations of Maundrel and Reland.)

Pater ipſe colendi
Haud facilem eſſe viam voluit, primuſque per artem
Movit agros; curis acuens mortalia corda
Nec torpere gravi paſſus SUA REGNA veterno.

Such are the uſeful victories which have been atchieved by MAN on the lofty mountains of Switzerland, along the rocky coaſt of Genoa, and upon the barren hills of Paleſtine; and ſince Wales has flouriſhed under the influence of Engliſh freedom, that rugged country has ſurely acquired ſome ſhare of the ſame induſtrious merit and the ſame artificial fertility. Thoſe Critics who interpret the compariſon of Paleſtine and Wales as a tacit libel on the former, are themſelves guilty of an unjuſt ſatire againſt the latter, of thoſe countries. Such is the injuſtice of Mr. Apthorpe and of the anonymous *Gentleman:* but if Mr. Davis (as we may ſuſpect from his name) is himſelf of Cambrian origin, his patriotiſm on this occaſion has protected me from his zeal.

V.

I ſhall begin this article by the confeſſion of an error which candour might perhaps excuſe, but which my Adverſary magnifies by a pathetic interrogation. "When he tells us, that he "has carefully examined all the original ma- "terials, are we to believe him? or is it his "deſign to try how far the credulity and eaſy "diſpoſition of the age will ſuffer him to pro- "ceed unſuſpected and undiſcovered [6]?" *Quouſque tandem abuteris Catilina patientiâ noſtrâ?*

In ſpeaking of the danger of idolatry, I had quoted the pictoreſque expreſſion of Tertullian, "Recogita ſylvam et quantæ latitant ſpinæ," and finding it marked c. 10 in my Notes, I haſtily, though naturally, added *de Idololatria*, inſtead of *de Corona Militis*, and referred to one Treatiſe of Tertullian inſtead of another [7]. And now let me aſk in my turn, whether Mr. Davis had any real knowledge of the paſſage which I had miſplaced, or whether he made an ungenerous uſe of his advantage, to inſinuate that I had invented or perverted the words of Tertullian? Ignorance is leſs criminal than malice, and I ſhall be ſatisfied if he will plead guilty to the milder charge.

The ſame obſervation may be extended to a paſſage of Le Clerc, which aſſerts, in the

[6] Davis, p. 25. [7] Gibbon, p. 553. Note 40.

cleareſt terms, the ignorance of the more ancient Jews with regard to a future ſtate. Le Clerc lay open before me, but while my eye moved from the book to the paper, I tranſcribed the reference c. 1. ſect. 8. inſtead of ſect. 1. c. 8. from the natural, but erroneous perſuaſion, that *Chapter* expreſſed the larger, and *Section* the ſmaller diviſion[8]: and this difference, of ſuch trifling moment and ſo eaſily rectified, holds a diſtinguiſhed place in the liſt of Miſrepreſentations which adorn Mr. Davis's Table of Contents[9]. But to return to Tertullian.

The *infernal* picture, which I had produced[1] from that vehement writer, which excited the horror of every humane reader, and which even Mr. Davis will not explicitly defend, has furniſhed him with a few critical cavils[2]. Happy ſhould I think myſelf, if the materials of my Hiſtory could be always expoſed to the Examination of the Public; and I ſhall be content with appealing to the impartial Reader, whether my Verſion of this Paſſage is not as fair and as faithful, as the more literal tranſlation which Mr. Davis has exhibited in an oppoſite column. I ſhall only juſtify two

[8] Gibbon, p. 560, Note 58.
[9] Davis, p. 19.
[1] Gibbon, p. 566.
[2] Davis, p. 29—33.

expreſſions which have provoked his indignation. 1. I had obſerved that the zealous African purſues the infernal deſcription in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticiſms; the inſtances of Gods, of Kings, of Magiſtrates, of Philoſophers, of Poets, of Tragedians, were introduced into my Tranſlation. Thoſe which I had omitted, relate to the Dancers, the Charioteers, and the Wreſtlers; and it is almoſt impoſſible to expreſs thoſe conceits which are connected with the language and manners of the Romans. But the reader will be *ſufficiently* ſhocked, when he is informed that Tertullian alludes to the improvement which the agility of the Dancers, the *red* livery of the Charioteers, and the attitudes of the Wreſtlers, would derive from the effects of fire. "Tunc "hiſtriones cognoſcendi ſolutiores multo per "ignem; tunc ſpectandus Auriga in flammea "rota totus ruber. Tunc Xyſtici contem-"plandi, non in Gymnaſiis, ſed in igne jacu-"lati." 2. I cannot refuſe to anſwer Mr. Davis's very particular queſtion, Why I appeal to Tertullian for the condemnation of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous of the Pagans? *Becauſe* I am inclined to beſtow that epithet on Trajan and the Antonines, Homer and Euripides, Plato and Ariſtotle, who are all manifeſtly included

cluded within the fiery deſcription which I had produced.

I am accuſed of miſquoting Tertullian ad Scapulam [3], as an evidence that Martyrdoms were lately introduced into Africa [4]. Beſides Tertullian, I had quoted from Ruinart (Acta Sincera, p. 84.) the Acts of the Scyllitan Martyrs; and a very moderate knowledge of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory would have informed Mr. Davis, that the two authorities thus connected eſtabliſh the propoſition aſſerted in my Text. Tertullian, in the above-mentioned Chapter, ſpeaks of one of the Proconſuls of Africa, Vigellius Saturninus, "qui *primus hic* gladium in "nos egit;" the Acta Sincera repreſent the ſame Magiſtrate as the Judge of the Scyllitan Martyrs; and Ruinart, with the conſent of the beſt Critics, aſcribes their ſufferings to the perſecution of Severus. Was it my fault if Mr. Davis was incapable of ſupplying the intermediate ideas?

Is it likewiſe neceſſary that I ſhould juſtify the frequent uſe which I have made of Tertullian? His copious writings diſplay a lively and intereſting picture of the primitive Church, and the ſcantineſs of original materials ſcarcely left me the liberty of choice. Yet as I was

[3] Davis, p. 35, 36. [4] Gibbon, p 609, Note 172.

ſenſible,

ſenſible, that the Montaniſm of Tertullian is the convenient ſcreen which our orthodox Divines have placed before his errors, I have, with peculiar caution, confined myſelf to thoſe works which were compoſed in the more early and ſounder part of his life.

As a collateral juſtification of my frequent appeals to this African Preſbyter, I had introduced, in the third edition of my Hiſtory, two paſſages of Jerom and Prudentius, which prove that Tertullian was the maſter of Cyprian, and that Cyprian was the maſter of the Latin Church[5]. Mr. Davis aſſures me, however, that I ſhould have done better not to have "added this note[6], as I have only accumu-"lated my inaccuracies." One inaccuracy he had indeed detected, an error of the preſs, Hieronym. de Viris illuſtribus, c. 53 for 63; but this advantage is dearly purchaſed by Mr. Davis. Επιδος τον διδασκαλον, which he produces as the original words of Cyprian, has a braver and more learned ſound, than *Da magiſtrum*; but the quoting in Greek, a ſentence which was pronounced, and is recorded, in Latin, ſeems to bear the mark of the moſt ridiculous pedantry; unleſs Mr. Davis, conſulting for the firſt time the Works of Jerom, miſtook the Verſion of

[5] Gibbon, p. 566. N. 72.

[6] Davis, p. 145.

Sophronius,

Sophronius, which is printed in the oppoſite column, for the Text of his original Author. My reference to Prudentius, Hymn. xiii. 100. cannot ſo eaſily be juſtified, as I preſumptuouſly believed that my critics would continue to read till they came to a full ſtop. I ſhall now place before them, not the firſt verſe only, but the entire period, which they will find full, expreſs, and ſatisfactory. The Poet ſays of St. Cyprian, whom he places in Heaven,

Nec minus involitat terris, nec ab hoc recedit orbe:
Differit, eloquitur, tractat, docet, inſtruit, prophetat;
Nec *Libyæ populos* tantum regit, exit uſque in ortum
Solis, et uſque obitum; *Gallos* fovet, imbuit *Britannos*,
Preſidet *Heſperiæ*, Chriſtum ſerit ultimis *Hiberis*.

VI.

On the ſubject of the imminent dangers which the Apocalypſe has ſo narrowly eſcaped[7], Mr. Davis accuſes me of miſrepreſenting the ſentiments of Sulpicius Severus and Fra-Paolo[8], with this difference, however, that I was incapable of reading or underſtanding the text of the Latin author; but that I wilfully perverted the ſenſe of the Italian hiſtorian. Theſe imputations I ſhall eaſily wipe away, by ſhewing that, in the firſt inſtance, I am proba-

SULPICIUS SEVERUS AND FRA-PAOLO.

[7] Gibbon, p. 563, 564. N. 67.
[8] Davis, p. 40—44.

bly

bly in the right; and that, in the ſecond, he is certainly in the wrong.

1. The conciſe and elegant Sulpicius, who has been juſtly ſtyled the Chriſtian Salluſt, after mentioning the exile and Revelations of St. John in the iſle of Patmos, obſerves (and ſurely the obſervation is in the language of complaint), "Librum ſacræ Apocalypſis, qui "quidem *a pleriſque* aut ſtulte aut impie non "recipitur, conſcriptum edidit." I am found guilty of ſuppoſing *plerique* to ſignify *the greater number*; whereas Mr. Davis, with Stephens's Dictionary in his hand, is able to prove that *plerique* has not *always* that extenſive meaning, and that a claſſic of good authority has uſed the word in a much more limited and qualified ſenſe. Let the Examiner therefore try to apply his exception to this particular caſe. For my part, *I* ſtand under the protection of the general uſage of the Latin language, and with a ſtrong preſumption in favour of the juſtice of my cauſe, or at leaſt of the innocence and fairneſs of my intentions; ſince I have tranſlated a familiar word, according to its acknowledged and ordinary acceptation.

But, "if I had looked into the paſſage, and "found that Sulpicius Severus there expreſsly "tells us, that the Apocalypſe was the work "of St. John, I could not have committed ſo

"unfortunate

" unfortunate a *blunder*, as to cite this Father " as ſaying, That the greater number of Chriſ- " tians denied its Canonical authority [9]." Unfortunate indeed would have been my blunder, had I aſſerted that the ſame Chriſtians who denied its Canonical authority, admitted it to be the work of an Apoſtle. Such indeed was the opinion of Severus himſelf, and his opinion has obtained the ſanction of the Church; but the Chriſtians whom he taxes with folly or impiety for rejecting this ſacred book, muſt have ſupported their error by attributing the Apocalypſe to ſome uninſpired writer; to John the Preſbyter, or to Cerinthus the Heretic.

If the rules of grammar and of logic authoriſe, or at leaſt allow me to tranſlate *plerique* by the *greater number*, the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of the fourth century illuſtrates and juſtifies this obvious interpretation. From a fair compariſon of the populouſneſs and learning of the Greek and Latin Churches, may I not conclude that the former contained the *greater number* of Chriſtians qualified to paſs ſentence on a myſterious prophecy compoſed in the Greek language? May I not affirm, on the authority of St. Jerom, that the Apocalypſe was generally rejected by the Greek Churches?

[9] Davis, p. 270.

" Quod ſi eam (the Epiſtle to the Hebrews) " Latinorum conſuetudo non recipit inter " Scripturas Canonicas; nec Græcorum Ec- " cleſiæ Apocalypſim Johannis eadem libertate " ſuſcipiunt. Et tamen nos utramque ſuſcipi- " mus, nequaqam hujus temporis conſuetu- " dinem, ſed veterum auctoritatem ſequentes." Epiſtol. ad Dardanum, tom. iii. p. 68.

It is not my deſign to enter any farther into the controverted hiſtory of that famous book; but I am called upon [1] to defend my Remark that the Apocalypſe was tacitly excluded from the ſacred canon by the council of Laodicea (Canon LX.). To defend my Remark, I need only ſtate the fact in a ſimple, but more particular manner. The aſſembled Biſhops of Aſia, after enumerating all the books of the Old and New Teſtament which ſhould be read in churches, omit the Apocalypſe, and the Apocalypſe alone; at a time when it was rejected or queſtioned by many pious and learned Chriſtians, who might deduce a very plauſible argument from the ſilence of the Synod.

2. When the Council of Trent reſolved to pronounce ſentence on the Canon of Scripture, the opinion which prevailed, after ſome debate, was to declare the Latin Vulgate authentic and

[1] By Mr. Davis, p. 41. and by Dr. Chelſum, Remarks, p. 57.

almoſt infallible; and this ſentence, which was guarded by formidable Anathemas, ſecured all the books of the Old and New Teſtament which compoſed that ancient verſion, " che ſi " dichiaraſſero tutti in tutte le parte come ſi " trovano nella Biblia Latina, eſſer di Divina " è ugual autorita." (Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. ii. p. 147. Helmſtadt *(Vicenza)* 1761.) When the merit of that Verſion was diſcuſſed, the majority of the Theologians urged, with confidence and ſucceſs, that it was abſolutely neceſſary to receive the Vulgate as authentic and inſpired, unleſs they wiſhed to abandon the victory to the Lutherans, and the honours of the Church to the Grammarians. " In contrario della maggior parte dè Teo- " logi era detto .... che-queſti nuovi Gram- " matici confonderanno ogni coſa, e ſarà far- " gli giudici e arbitri della fede; e in luogo " dè Teologi e Canoniſti, converrà tener il " primo conto nell' aſſumere a Veſcovati e " Cardinalati dè pedanti." (Iſtoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. ii. p. 149.) The ſagacious Hiſtorian, who had ſtudied the Council, and the judicious Le Courayer, who had ſtudied his Author (Hiſtoire du Concile de Trente, tom. i. p. 245. Londres 1736), conſider this *ridiculous* reaſon as the moſt powerful argument which influenced the debates of the Council. But

Mr. Davis, jealous of the honour of a Synod which placed tradition on a level with the Bible, affirms that Fra-Paolo has given another more ſubſtantial reaſon on which theſe Popiſh Biſhops built their determination, That after dividing the books under their conſideration into three claſſes; of thoſe which had been always held for divine; of thoſe whoſe authenticity had formerly been doubted, but which by uſe and cuſtom had acquired canonical authority; and of thoſe which had never been properly certified; the Apocalypſe was judiciouſly placed by the Fathers of the Council in the ſecond of theſe claſſes.

The Italian paſſage, which, for that purpoſe, Mr. Davis has alleged at the bottom of his page, is indeed taken from the text of Fra-Paolo; but the reader, who will give himſelf the trouble, or rather the pleaſure, of peruſing that incomparable hiſtorian, will diſcover that Mr. Davis has *only* miſtaken a motion of the oppoſition, for a meaſure of the adminiſtration. He will find, that this critical diviſion, which is ſo erroneouſly aſcribed to the public reaſon of the Council, was no more than the ineffectual propoſal of a temperate minority, which was ſoon over-ruled by a majority of artful Stateſmen, bigotted Monks, and dependent Biſhops.

" We

"We have here an evident proof that Mr. "Gibbon is equally expert in misrepresenting "a modern as an ancient writer, or that he "wilfully conceals the most material reason, "with a design, no doubt, to instil into his "Reader a notion, that the authenticity of the "Apocalypse is built on the slightest foun-"dation[3]."

VII.

I had cautiously observed (for I was apprised of the obscurity of the subject) that the Epistle of Clemens does not lead us to discover any traces of Episcopacy either at Corinth or Rome. In this observation I particularly alluded to the republican form of salutation, "The Church "of God inhabiting Rome, to the Church of "God inhabiting Corinth;" without the least mention of a Bishop or President in either of those ecclesiastical assemblies. CLEMENS.

Yet the piercing eye of Mr. Davis[4] can discover not only traces, but evident proofs, of Episcopacy, in this Epistle of Clemens; and he actually quotes two passages, in which he distinguishes by capital letters the word BISHOPS, whose institution Clemens refers to the Apostles themselves. But can Mr. Davis hope to gain credit by such egregious trifling?

[2] Davis, p. 44.
[3] Gibbon, p. 592. N. 110.
[4] Davis, p. 44, 45.

While

While we are ſearching for the origin of Biſhops, not merely as an eccleſiaſtical title, but as the peculiar name of an order diſtinct from that of Preſbyters, he idly produces a paſſage, which, by declaring that the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in every place *Biſhops* and *Deacons*, evidently confounds the *Preſbyters* with one or other of thoſe two ranks. I have neither inclination nor intereſt to engage in a controverſy which I had conſidered only in an hiſtorical light; but I have already ſaid enough to ſhew, that there are more traces of a diſingenuous mind in Mr. Davis, than of an Epiſcopal Order in the Epiſtle of Clemens.

VIII.

EUSEBIUS. Perhaps, on ſome future occaſion, I may examine the hiſtorical character of Euſebius; perhaps I may enquire, how far it appears from his words and actions, that the learned Biſhop of Cæſarea was averſe to the uſe of fraud, when it was employed in the ſervice of Religion. At preſent, I am only concerned to defend my own truth and honour, from the reproach of miſrepreſenting the ſenſe of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian. Some of the charges of Mr. Davis on this head are ſo ſtrong, ſo pointed, ſo vehemently urged, that he ſeems to have ſtaked, on the event of the trial, the merits of our

our reſpective characters. If his aſſertions are true, I deſerve the contempt of learned, and the abhorrence of good, men. If they are falſe, *******

1. I had remarked, without any malicious intention, that one of the ſeventeen Chriſtians who ſuffered at Alexandria was likewiſe *accuſed* of robbery [5]. Mr. Davis [6] ſeems enraged becauſe I did not add that he was *falſely* accuſed, takes ſome unneceſſary pains to convince me that the Greek word συνεκφαντηθη ſignifies *falſo accuſatus*, and "can hardly think that any one "who had looked into the original, would "dare thus abſolutely to contradict the plain "teſtimony of the author he *pretends* to fol-"low." A ſimple narrative of this fact, in the relation of which Mr. Davis has *really* ſuppreſſed ſeveral material circumſtances, will afford the cleareſt juſtification.

Euſebius has preſerved an original letter from Dionyſius Biſhop of Alexandria to Fabius Biſhop of Antioch, in which the former relates the circumſtances of the perſecution which had lately afflicted the capital of Egypt. He

[5] Gibbon, p. 654, N. 75. [6] Davis, p. 61, 62, 63. This ridiculous charge is repeated by another *Sycophant* (in the Greek ſenſe of the word), and forms one of the *valuable* communications, which the learning of a Randolph ſuggeſted to the candour of a Chelſum. See Remarks, p. 209.

allows

allows a rank among the martyrs to one Nemeſion, an Egyptian, who was falſely or maliciouſly accuſed as a companion of robbers. Before the Centurion he juſtified himſelf from this calumny, which did not relate to him; but being charged as a Chriſtian, he was brought in chains before the Governor. That unjuſt magiſtrate, after inflicting on Nemeſion *a double meaſure of ſtripes and tortures*, gave orders that he ſhould be *burnt with the robbers*. (Dionyſ. apud Euſeb. l. vi. c. 41.)

It is evident that Dionyſius repreſents the religious ſufferer as innocent of the criminal accuſation which had been falſely brought againſt him. It is no leſs evident, that whatever might be the opinion of the Centurion, the ſupreme magiſtrate conſidered Nemeſion as guilty, and that he affected to ſhew, by the meaſure of his tortures, and by the companions of his execution, that he puniſhed him, not only as a Chriſtian, but as a robber. The evidence againſt Nemeſion, and that which might be produced in his favour, are equally loſt; and the queſtion (which fortunately is of little moment) of his guilt or innocence reſts ſolely on the oppoſite judgments of his eccleſiaſtical and civil ſuperiors. I could eaſily perceive that both the Biſhop and the Governor were actuated by different paſſions

and

and prejudices towards the unhappy ſufferer; but it was impoſſible for me to decide which of the two was the moſt likely to indulge his prejudices and paſſions at the expence of truth. In this doubtful ſituation, I conceived that I had acted with the moſt unexceptionable caution, when I contented myſelf with obſerving that Nemeſion was *accuſed*; a circumſtance of a public and authentic nature, in which both parties were agreed.

Mr. Davis will no longer aſk, "what poſ-"ſible evaſion then can Mr. Gibbon have re-"courſe to, to convince the world that I have "*falſely* accuſed *him* of a groſs miſrepreſenta-"tion of Euſebius?"

2. Mr. Davis[7] charges me with falſifying (*falſifying* is a very ſerious word) the teſtimony of Euſebius; becauſe it ſuited my purpoſe to magnify the humanity and even kindneſs of Maxentius towards the afflicted Chriſtians[8]. To ſupport this charge, he produces ſome part of a chapter of Euſebius, the Engliſh in his text, the Greek in his notes, and makes the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian expreſs himſelf in the following terms: "Although Maxentius at "firſt favoured the Chriſtians with a view of "popularity, yet afterwards, being addicted

[7] Davis, p. 64, 65. [8] Gibbon, p. 693, N. 168.

" to magic, and every other impiety, HE ex-
" erted himſelf in perſecuting the Chriſtians, in
" a more ſevere and deſtructive manner than
" his predeceſſors had done before him."

If it were in my power to place the volume and chapter of Euſebius (Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. viii. c. 14.) before the eyes of every reader, I ſhould be ſatisfied and ſilent. I ſhould not be under the neceſſity of proteſting, that in the paſſage quoted, or rather abridged, by my adverſary, the ſecond member of the period, which alone contradicts my account of Maxentius, has not the moſt diſtant reference to that odious tyrant. After diſtinguiſhing the mild conduct which *he* affected towards the Chriſtians, Euſebius proceeds to animadvert with becoming ſeverity on the general vices of his reign; the rapes, the murders, the oppreſſion, the promiſcuous maſſacres, which I had faithfully related in their proper place, and in which the Chriſtians, not in their religious, but in their civil capacity, muſt occaſionally have ſhared with the reſt of his unhappy ſubjects. The Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian then makes a tranſition to *another tyrant*, the cruel Maximin, who carried away from his friend and ally Maxentius the prize of ſuperior wickedneſs; for HE was addicted to magic arts, and was a cruel perſecutor of the Chriſtians. The evidence of words and facts,

the

the plain meaning of Euſebius, the concurring teſtimony of Cæcilius or Lactantius, and the ſuperfluous authority of Verſions and Commentators, eſtabliſh beyond the reach of doubt or cavil, that Maximin, and not Maxentius, is ſtigmatized as a perſecutor, and that Mr. Davis alone has deſerved the reproach of *falſifying* the teſtimony of Euſebius.

Let him examine the chapter on which he founds his accuſation. If in that moment his feelings are not of the moſt painful and humiliating kind, he muſt indeed be an object of pity!

3. *A groſs blunder* is imputed to me by this polite antagoniſt[9], for quoting, under the name of Jerom, the Chronicle which I ought to have deſcribed as the work and property of Euſebius[1]; and Mr. Davis kindly points out the occaſion of my blunder, That it was the conſequence of my looking no farther than Dodwell for this remark, and of not rightly underſtanding his reference. Perhaps the Hiſtorian of the Roman Empire may be credited, when he affirms that he frequently conſulted a Latin Chronicle of the affairs of that Empire; and he may the ſooner be credited, if he ſhews that he knows ſomething more of this Chronicle beſides the name and the title-page.

[9] Davis, p. 66. [1] Gibbon, p. 673, N. 125.

Mr. Davis, who talks ſo familiarly of the Chronicle of Euſebius, will be ſurpriſed to hear that the Greek original no longer exiſts. Some chronological fragments, which had ſucceſſively paſſed through the hands of Africanus and Euſebius, are ſtill extant, though in a very corrupt and mutilated ſtate, in the compilations of Syncellus and Cedrenus. They have been collected, and diſpoſed by the labour and ingenuity of Joſeph Scaliger; but that proud Critic, always ready to applaud his own ſucceſs, did not flatter himſelf, that he had reſtored the hundredth part of the genuine Chronicle of Euſebius. "Ex eo *(Syncello)* omnia "Euſebiana excerpſimus quæ quidem depre-"hendere potuimus; quæ, quanquam ne cen-"teſima quidem pars eorum eſſe videtur quæ "ab Euſebio relicta ſunt, aliquod tamen juſtum "volumen explere poſſunt." (Joſ. Scaliger Animadverſiones in Græca Euſebii in Theſauro Temporum, p. 401. Amſtelod. 1658.) While the Chronicle of Euſebius was perfect and entire, the ſecond book was tranſlated into Latin by Jerom, with the freedom, or rather licence, which that voluminous Author, as well as his friend or enemy Rufinus, always aſſumed. "Plurima in vertendo mutat, infulcit, præterit," ſays Scaliger himſelf, in the Prolegomena, p. 22. In the perſecution of Aurelian, which has ſo much

much offended Mr. Davis, we are able to diſtinguiſh the work of Euſebius from that of Jerom, by comparing the expreſſions of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory with thoſe of the Chronicle. The former affirms, that, towards the end of his reign, Aurelian was moved by ſome councils to excite a perſecution againſt the Chriſtians; that his deſign occaſioned a great and general rumour; but that when the letters were prepared, and as it were ſigned, Divine Juſtice diſmiſſed him from the world. Ηδη τισι ϛελαις ως αν διωγμον καθ' ἡμων εγειρειεν ανεκινειτο. πολυς τε ην ὁ παρα πασι περι τουτου λογος. μελλοντα δε ηδη και σχεδον ειπειν τοις καθ' ἡμων γραμμασιν υποσημειωμενον, θεια μετεσιν δικη. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. vii. c. 30. Whereas the Chronicle relates, that Aurelian was killed after he had excited or moved a perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, "cum adverſum "nos perſecutionem moviſſet."

From this manifeſt difference I aſſume a right to aſſert; firſt, that the expreſſion of the Chronicle of *Jeram*, which is always proper, became in this inſtance neceſſary; and ſecondly, that the language of the Fathers is ſo ambiguous and incorrect, that we are at a loſs to determine how far Aurelian had carried his intention before he was aſſaſſinated. I have neither per-

verted the *fact*, nor have I been guilty of *a groſs blunder*.

IX.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

" The perſons accuſed of Chriſtianity had " a convenient time allowed them to ſettle " their domeſtic concerns, and to prepare their " anſwer[1]." This obſervation had been ſuggeſted, partly by a general expreſſion of Cyprian (de Lapſis, p. 88. Edit. Fell. Amſtelod. 1700), and more eſpecially by the ſecond Apology of Juſtin Martyr, who gives a particular and curious example of this legal delay.

The expreſſions of Cyprian, " dies negan- " tibus præſtitutus, &c." which Mr. Davis moſt prudently ſuppreſſes, are illuſtrated by Moſheim in the following words: " Primum qui delati " erant aut ſuſpecti, illis certum dierum ſpa- " tium judex definiebat, quo decurrente, ſe- " cum deliberare poterant, utrum profiteri " Chriſtum an negare mallent; *explorandæ fidei* " *præfiniebantur dies*, per hoc tempus liberi " manebant in domibus ſuis; nec impediebat " aliquis quod ex conſequentibus apparet, ne " fugâ ſibi conſulerent. Satis hoc erat huma- " num." (De Rebus Chriſtianis ante Conſtantinum, p. 480.) The practice of Egypt was ſometimes more expeditious and ſevere; but

[1] Gibbon, p. 663.

this

this humane indulgence was ſtill allowed in Africa during the perſecution of Decius.

But my appeal to Juſtin Martyr is encountered by Mr. Davis with the following declaration[2]: "The reader will obſerve, that Mr. "Gibbon does not make any reference to any "ſection or diviſion of this part of Juſtin's work; "with what view we may ſhrewdly ſuſpect, "when I tell him, that after an accurate peruſal "of the whole ſecond Apology, I can boldly "affirm, that the following inſtance is the only "one that bears the moſt diſtant ſimilitude to "what Mr. Gibbon relates as above on the "authority of Juſtin. What I find in Juſtin "is as follows: "A woman being converted "to Chriſtianity, is afraid to aſſociate with her "huſband, becauſe he is an abandoned repro-"bate, leſt ſhe ſhould partake of his ſins. Her "huſband, not being able to accuſe *her*, vents "his rage in this manner on one Ptolemæus, "a teacher of Chriſtianity, and who had con-"verted her, *&c.*" Mr. Davis then proceeds to relate the ſeverities inflicted on Ptolemæus, who made a frank and inſtant profeſſion of his faith; and he ſternly exclaims, that if I take every opportunity of paſſing encomiums on the humanity of Roman magiſtrates, it is incum-

[2] Davis, p. 71, 72.

bent

bent on me to produce better evidence than this.

His demand may be eaſily ſatisfied, and I need only for that purpoſe tranſcribe and tranſlate the words of Juſtin, which *immediately* precede the Greek quotation alleged at the bottom of my adverſary's page. I am poſſeſſed of two editions of Juſtin Martyr, that of Cambridge, 1768, in 8vo, by Dr. Aſhton, who only publiſhed the two Apologies; and that of all his works, publiſhed in fol. Paris, 1742, by the Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maar: the following curious paſſage may be found, p. 164, of the former, and p. 89 of the latter Edition. κατηγοριαν πεποιηται, λεγων αυτην χριστιανην ειναι, και ἡ μεν βιβλιδιον σοι τω αυτοκρατορι ανεδεδωκε, προτερον συνχωρηθηναι αυτη διοικησασθαι τα εαυτης αξιωσα. επειτα απολογησασθαι περι τε κατηγορματος, μετα την των πραγματων αυτης διοικησιν. και συνεχωρησας τετο. "He brought an accuſation "againſt her, ſaying, that ſhe was a Chriſtian. "But ſhe preſented a petition to the Emperor, "praying that ſhe might firſt be allowed to "ſettle her domeſtic concerns; and promiſing, "that, after ſhe had ſettled them, ſhe would "then put in her anſwer to the accuſation. "This you granted."

I diſdain to add a ſingle reflection; nor ſhall I qualify the conduct of my adverſary with any

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of thoſe harſh epithets, which might be interpreted as the expreſſions of reſentment, though I ſhould be conſtrained to uſe them as the only words in the Engliſh language, which could accurately repreſent my cool and unprejudiced ſentiments.

X.

In ſtating the toleration of Chriſtianity during the greateſt part of the reign of Dioclesian, I had obſerved [3], that the principal officers of the palace, whoſe names and functions were particularly ſpecified, enjoyed, with their wives and children, the free exerciſe of the Chriſtian religion. Mr. Davis twice affirms [4], in the moſt deliberate manner, that this pretended fact, which is aſſerted on the ſole authority, is contradicted by the poſitive evidence, of Lactantius. In both theſe *affirmations* Mr. Davis is inexcuſably miſtaken. LACTANTIUS.

1. When the ſtorms of perſecution aroſe, the Prieſts, who were offended by the ſign of the Croſs, obtained an order from the Emperor, that the profane, the Chriſtians, who accompanied him to the Temple, ſhould be compelled to offer ſacrifice; and this incident is mentioned by the Rhetorician, to whom I ſhall not at preſent refuſe the name of Lactantius. The act of

[3] Gibbon, p. 676. N. 133, 134. [4] Davis, p. 75, 76.

idolatry, which, at the expiration of eighteen years, was required of the officers of Diocletian, is a manifeſt proof that their religious freedom had hitherto been inviolate, except in the ſingle inſtance of waiting on their maſter to the Temple; a ſervice leſs criminal than the profane compliance for which the Miniſter of the King of Syria ſolicited the permiſſion of the Prophet of Iſrael.

2. The reference which I made to Lactantius expreſsly pointed out this exception to their freedom. But the proof of the toleration was built on a different teſtimony, which my diſingenuous adverſary has concealed; an ancient and curious inſtruction, compoſed by Biſhop Theonas, for the uſe of Lucian, and the other Chriſtian eunuchs of the palace of Diocletian. This authentic piece was publiſhed in the Spicilegium of Dom Luc d'Acheri; as I had not the opportunity of conſulting the original, I was contented with quoting it on the faith of Tillemont, and the reference to it immediately precedes (ch. xvi. note 133.) the citation of Lactantius (note 134).

Mr. Davis may now anſwer his own queſtion, "What apology can be made for thus aſſert-"ing, on the ſole authority of Lactantius, "facts which Lactantius ſo expreſsly denies?"

XI. "I

XI.

"I have already given a curious inſtance "of our Author's aſſerting, on the authority of "Dion Caſſius, a fact not mentioned by that "Hiſtorian. I ſhall now produce a very ſin- "gular proof of his endeavouring to conceal "from us a paſſage really contained in him [4]." Nothing but the angry vehemence with which theſe charges are urged, could engage me to take the leaſt notice of them. In themſelves they are doubly contemptible; they are trifling, and they are falſe. DION CASSIUS.

1. Mr. Davis [5] had imputed to me as a crime, that I had mentioned, on the ſole teſtimony of Dion (l. lxviii. p. 1145.), the ſpirit of rebellion which inflamed the Jews, from the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius [6], whilſt the paſſage of that Hiſtorian is confined to an inſurrection in Cyprus and Cyrene, which broke out within that period. The Reader who will caſt his eye on the Note (ch. xvi. note 1.), which is ſupported by that quotation from Dion, will diſcover that it related only to *this* particular fact. The general poſition, which is indeed too notorious to require any proof, I had carefully juſtified in the courſe of the ſame paragraph; partly by another reference to Dion Caſſius, partly by an

[4] Davis, p. 83. [5] Id. p. 11. [6] Gibbon, p. 622.

alluſion to the well-known Hiſtory of Joſephus, and partly by *ſeveral* quotations from the learned and judicious Baſnage, who has explained, in the moſt ſatisfactory manner, the principles and conduct of the rebellious Jews.

2. The paſſage of Dion, which I am accuſed of endeavouring to conceal, might perhaps have remained inviſible, even to the piercing eye of Mr. Davis, if *I* had not carefully reported it in its proper place[7]: and it was in my power to report it, without being guilty of any *inconſiderate contradiction*. I had obſerved, that, in the large hiſtory of Dion Caſſius, Xiphilin had not been able to diſcover the name of *Chriſtians*: yet I afterwards quote a paſſage in which Marcia, the favourite Concubine of Commodus, is celebrated as the Patroneſs of the *Chriſtians*. Mr. Davis has tranſcribed my quotation, but *he* has concealed the important words which I now diſtinguiſh by Italics (ch. xvi. note 106. Dion Caſſius, *or rather his abbreviator Xiphilin*, l. lxxii. p. 1206.) The reference is fairly made and cautiouſly qualified: I am already ſecure from the imputations of fraud or inconſiſtency; and the opinion which attributes the laſt-mentioned paſſage to the Abbreviator, rather than to the original Hiſtorian, may be ſupported by the moſt unexception-

[7] Gibbon, p. 667. N. 107.

able

able authorities. I ſhall protect myſelf by thoſe of Reimar (in his Edition of Dion Caſſius, tom. ii. p. 1207. note 34.), and of Dr. Lardner; and ſhall only tranſcribe the words of the latter, in his Collection of Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. iii. p. 57.

"This paragraph I rather think to be Xi-
"phiilin's than Dion's. The ſtyle at leaſt is
"Xiphilin's. In the other paſſages before
"quoted, Dion ſpeaks of *Impiety*, or *Atheiſm*,
"or *Judaiſm*; but never uſeth the word *Chriſ-*
"*tians*. Another thing that may make us
"doubt whether this obſervation be entirely
"Dion's, is the phraſe, "it is related (ἱστο-
"ρεῖται)." For at the beginning of the reign
"of Commodus, he ſays, "Theſe things,
"and what follows, I write not from the report
"of others, but from my own knowledge and
"obſervation." However, the ſenſe may be
"Dion's; but I wiſh we had alſo his ſtyle with-
"out any adulteration." For my own part, I muſt, in my private opinion, aſcribe even the ſenſe of this paſſage to Xiphilin. The *Monk* might eagerly collect and inſert an anecdote which related to the domeſtic hiſtory of the church; but the religion of a courtezan muſt have appeared an object of very little moment in the eyes of a *Roman Conſul*, who, at leaſt in every other part of his hiſtory, diſdained or neglected

neglected to mention the name of the Chriſtians.

"What ſhall we ſay now? Do we not diſ-
"cover the name of Chriſtians in the Hiſtory
"of Dion? With what *aſſurance* then can
"Mr. Gibbon, after aſſerting a fact manifeſtly
"*untrue*, lay claim to the merits of diligence
"and accuracy, the indiſpenſable duty of an
"Hiſtorian? Or can he expect us to credit
"his aſſertion, that he has carefully examined
"all the original materials[8]?"

Mr. Gibbon may ſtill maintain the character of an Hiſtorian; but it is difficult to conceive how Mr. Davis will ſupport his pretenſions, if he aſpires to that of a Gentleman.

I almoſt heſitate whether I ſhould take any notice of another ridiculous charge which Mr. Davis includes in the article of Dion Caſſius. My adverſary owns, that I have occaſionally produced the ſeveral paſſages of the Auguſtan Hiſtory which relate to the Chriſtians; but he fiercely contends that they amount to more than *ſix lines*[9]. I really have not meaſured them: nor did I mean that looſe expreſſion as a preciſe and definite number. If, on a nicer ſurvey, thoſe ſhort hints, when they are brought together, ſhould be found to exceed ſix

[8] Davis, p. 83. [9] Gibbon, p. 634. N. 24.

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of the long lines of my folio edition, I am content that my critical Antagoniſt ſhould ſubſtitute eight, or ten, or twelve, lines: nor ſhall I think either my learning or my veracity much intereſted in this important alteration.

XII.

After a ſhort deſcription of the unworthy conduct of thoſe Apoſtates who, in a time of perſecution, deſerted the Faith of Chriſt, I produced the evidence of a Pagan Proconſul [1], and of two chriſtian Biſhops, Pliny, Dionyſius of Alexandria, and Cyprian. And here the unforgiving Critic remarks, "That Pliny has "not particularized that difference of conduct "(in the different Apoſtates) which Mr. Gib-"bon here deſcribes: yet his name ſtands at "the head of thoſe Authors whom he has "cited on the occaſion. It is allowed indeed "that this diſtinction is made by the other "Authors; but as Pliny, the firſt referred to "by Mr. Gibbon, gives him no cauſe or rea-"ſon to uſe *them*," (I cannot help Mr. Davis's bad Engliſh) "it is certainly very repre-"henſible in our Author, thus to confound "their teſtimony, and to make a needleſs and "improper reference [2]." PLINY, &c.

[1] Gibbon, p. 664. N. 102. [2] Davis, p. 87, 88.

A criticiſm of this ſort can only tend to expoſe Mr. Davis's total ignorance of hiſtorical compoſition. The Writer who aſpires to the name of Hiſtorian, is obliged to conſult a variety of original teſtimonies, each of which, taken ſeparately, is perhaps imperfect and partial. By a judicious re-union and arrangement of theſe diſperſed materials, he endeavours to form a conſiſtent and intereſting narrative. Nothing ought to be inſerted which is not proved by ſome of the witneſſes; but their evidence muſt be ſo intimately blended together, that as it is unreaſonable to expect that each of them ſhould vouch for the whole, ſo it would be impoſſible to define the boundaries of their reſpective property. Neither Pliny, nor Dionyſius, nor Cyprian, mention *all* the circumſtances and *diſtinctions* of the conduct of the Chriſtian Apoſtates; but if any of them was withdrawn, the account which I have given would, in ſome inſtance, be defective.

Thus much I thought neceſſary to ſay, as ſeveral of the ſubſequent *miſrepreſentations* of Oroſius, of Bayle, of Fabricius, of Gregory of Tours, &c. [3], which provoked the fury of Mr. Davis, are derived only from the ignorance of this common hiſtorical principle.

[3] Davis, p. 88. 90. 137.

Another

Another claſs of Miſrepreſentations, which my Adverſary urges with the ſame degree of vehemence (See in particular thoſe of Juſtin, Diodorus Siculus, and even Tacitus), requires the ſupport of another principle, which has not yet been introduced into the art of criticiſm; *that* when a modern hiſtorian appeals to the authority of the ancients for the truth of any particular fact; he makes himſelf anſwerable, I know not to what extent, for all the circumjacent errors or inconſiſtencies of the authors whom he has quoted.

XIII.

I am accuſed of throwing out a falſe accuſation againſt this Father[3], becauſe I had obſerved[4] that Ignatius, defending againſt the Gnoſtics the reſurrection of Chriſt, employs a vague and doubtful tradition, inſtead of quoting the certain teſtimony of the Evangeliſts: and this obſervation was juſtified by a remarkable paſſage of Ignatius, in his Epiſtle to the Smyrnæans, which I cited according to the volume and the page of the beſt edition of the Apoſtolical Fathers, publiſhed at Amſterdam, 1724, in two volumes in folio. The Criticiſm of Mr. Davis is announced by one of thoſe ſolemn declarations which leave not any

IGNATIUS.

[3] Davis, p. 100, 101. [4] Gibbon, p. 551. Note 35.

refuge, if they are convicted of falſehood. "I cannot find any paſſage that bears the leaſt "affinity to what Mr. Gibbon obſerves, in the "whole Epiſtle, which I have read over more "than once."

I had already marked the *ſituation*; nor is it in my power to prove the *exiſtence*, of this paſſage, by any other means than by producing the words of the original. Εγω γαρ και μετα την αναστασιν εν σαρκι αυτον οιδα και πιστευω ουτα, και οτε προς τους περι Πετρον ηλθεν, εφη αυτοις, λαβετε, ψυλαφησατε με, και ιδετε οτι ουκ ειμι δαιμονιον ασωματον. και ευθυς αυτου ηψαντο, και επιστευσαν. "I have known, and I believe, that after his "reſurrection likewiſe he exiſted in the fleſh: "And when he came to Peter, and to the reſt, "he ſaid unto them, Take, handle me, and "ſee that I am not an incorporeal dæmon or "ſpirit. And they touched him, and believ-"ed." The faith of the Apoſtles confuted the impious error of the Gnoſtics, which attributed only the *appearances* of a human body to the Son of God: and it was the great object of Ignatius, in the laſt moments of his life, to ſecure the Chriſtians of Aſia from the ſnares of thoſe dangerous Heretics. According to the tradition of the modern Greeks, Ignatius was the child whom Jeſus received into his arms (See Tillemont Mem. Eccleſ. tom. ii. part ii. p. 43.);

p. 43.); yet as he could scarcely be old enough to remember the resurrection of the Son of God, he must have derived his knowledge *either* from our present Evangelists, *or* from some Apocryphal Gospel, *or* from some unwritten tradition.

1. The Gospels of St. Luke and St. John would undoubtedly have supplied Ignatius with the most invincible proofs of the reality of the body of Christ, when he appeared to the Apostles after his resurrection; but neither of those Gospels contain the characteristic words of τὸ δαιμονικὸν ἀσώματον, and the important circumstance that either Peter, or *those* who were with Peter, touched the body of Christ and believed. Had the saint designed to quote the Evangelist on a very nice subject of controversy, he would not surely have exposed himself, by an inaccurate, or rather by a false, reference, to the just reproaches of the Gnostics. On this occasion, therefore, Ignatius did not employ, as he might have done, against the Heretics, the certain testimony of the Evangelists.

2. Jerom, who cites this remarkable passage from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnæans (See Catalog. Script. Eccles. in Ignatio, tom. i. p. 273. edit. Erasm. Basil. 1537), is of opinion that it was taken from the *Gospel* which he him-

ſelf had lately tranſlated: and *this*, from the compariſon of two other paſſages in the ſame Work (in Jacob. et in Matthæo, p. 264), appears to have been the Hebrew Goſpel, which was uſed by the Nazarenes of Beræa, as the genuine compoſition of St. Matthew. Yet Jerom mentions another Copy of this Hebrew Goſpel (ſo different from the Greek Text), which was extant in the library formed at Cæſarea, by the care of Pamphilus: whilſt the learned Euſebius, the friend of Pamphilus and the Biſhop of Cæſarea, very frankly declares (Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iii. c. 36.), that *he* is ignorant from whence Ignatius borrowed thoſe words, which are the ſubject of the preſent Inquiry.

3. The doubt which remains, is only whether he took them from an Apocryphal Book, or from *unwritten tradition:* and I thought myſelf ſafe from every ſpecies of Critics, when I embraced the rational ſentiment of Caſaubon and Pearſon. I ſhall produce the words of the Biſhop. "Præterea iterum obſervandum eſt, "quod de hac re ſcripſit Iſaacus Caſaubonus, "*Quinetiam fortaſſe verius, non ex Evangelio* "*Hebraico, Ignatium illa verba deſcripſiſſe, verum* "*traditionem allegaſſe non ſcriptam, quæ poſtea in* "*literas fuerit relata, et Hebraico Evangelio, quod* "*Matthæo tribuebant, inſerta.* Et hoc quidem "mihi multo veriſimilius videtur." (Pearſon. Vindiciæ

Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part ii. c. ix. p. 396. in tom. ii. Patr. Apoſtol.)

I may now ſubmit to the judgment of the Public, whether I have looked into the Epiſtle which I cite with ſuch a parade of learning, and *how profitably* Mr. Davis has read it over more than once.

XIV.

The learning and judgment of Moſheim had been of frequent uſe in the courſe of my Hiſtorical Inquiry, and I had not been wanting in proper expreſſions of gratitude. My vexatious Adverſary is always ready to ſtart from his ambuſcade, and to haraſs my march by a mode of attack, which cannot eaſily be reconciled with the laws of honourable war. The greateſt part of the Miſrepreſentations of Moſheim, which Mr. Davis has imputed to me[5], are of ſuch a nature, that I muſt indeed be humble, if I could perſuade myſelf to beſtow a moment of ſerious attention on them. *Whether* Moſheim could prove that an abſolute community of goods was not eſtabliſhed among the firſt Chriſtians of Jeruſalem; *whether* he ſuſpected the purity of the Epiſtles of Ignatius; *whether* he cenſured Dr. Middleton with tem- MOSHEIM.

[5] Davis, p. 95—97. 104—107. 114—132.

per or indignation (in this cauſe I muſt challenge Mr. Davis as an incompetent judge); *whether* he corroborates the *whole* of my deſcription of the prophetic office; *whether* he ſpeaks with approbation of the humanity of Pliny, and *whether* he attributed the ſame ſenſe to the *malefica* of Suetonius, and the *exitiabilis* of Tacitus? Theſe queſtions, even as Mr. Davis has ſtated them, lie open to the judgment of every reader, and the ſuperfluous obſervations which I could make, would be an abuſe of their time and of my own. As little ſhall I think of conſuming their patience, by examining whether Le Clerc and Moſheim *labour* in the interpretation of ſome texts of the Fathers, and particularly of a paſſage of Irenæus, which ſeem to favour the pretenſions of the Roman Biſhop. The material part of the paſſage of Irenæus conſiſts of about *four lines*; and in order to ſhew that the interpretations of Le Clerc and Moſheim are not *laboured*, Mr. Davis abridges them as much as poſſible in the ſpace of *twelve pages*. I know not whether the peruſal of my Hiſtory will juſtify the ſuſpicion of Mr. Davis, that I am ſecretly inclined to the intereſt of the Pope: but I cannot diſcover how the Proteſtant cauſe can be affected, if Irenæus in the ſecond, or Palavicini in the ſeventeenth century, were tempted, by any private

views,

views, to countenance in their writings the ſyſtem of eccleſiaſtical dominion, which has been purſued in every age by the aſpiring Biſhops of the Imperial city. Their conduct was adapted to the revolutions of the Chriſtian Republic, but the ſame ſpirit animated the haughty breaſts of Victor the Firſt, and of Paul the Fifth.

There ſtill remain one or two of theſe imputed Miſrepreſentations, which appear, and indeed only appear, to merit a little more attention. In ſtating the opinion of Moſheim with regard to the progreſs of the Goſpel, Mr. Davis boldly declares, "that I have *altered the* "*truth* of Moſheim's hiſtory, that I might "have an opportunity of contradicting the be-"lief and wiſhes of the Fathers[a]." In other words, I have been guilty of uttering a malicious falſehood.

I had endeavoured to mitigate the ſanguine expreſſion of the Fathers of the ſecond century, who had too haſtily diffuſed the light of Chriſtianity over every part of the globe, by obſerving, as an undoubted fact, "that the Bar-"barians of Scythia and Germany, who ſub-"verted the Roman Monarchy, were involved "in the errors of Paganiſm; and that even "the conqueſt of Iberia, of Armenia, or of

[a] Davis, p. 127.

"Æthiopia,

"Æthiopia, was not attempted with any de-
"gree of ſucceſs, till the ſceptre was in the
"hands of an orthodox Emperor[7]." I had referred the curious reader to the fourth century of Moſheim's General Hiſtory of the Church: Now Mr. Davis has diſcovered, and can prove, from that excellent work, "that
"Chriſtianity, not long after its firſt riſe, had
"been introduced into the leſs as well as
"greater Armenia; that part of the Goths,
"who inhabited Thracia, Mæſia, and Dacia,
"had received the Chriſtian religion long be-
"fore this century; and that Theophilus, their
"Biſhop, was preſent at the Council of
"Nice[8]."

On this occaſion, the reference was made to a popular work of Moſheim, for the ſatisfaction of the reader, that he might obtain the general view of the progreſs of Chriſtianity in the fourth century, which I had gradually acquired by ſtudying with ſome care the Eccleſiaſtic Antiquities of the Nations beyond the limits of the Roman Empire. If I had reaſonably ſuppoſed that the reſult of our common inquiries muſt be the ſame, ſhould I have deſerved a very harſh cenſure for my unſuſpecting confidence? Or if I had declined the invidious taſk

[7] Gibbon, p. 611, 612. [8] Davis, p. 126, 127.

of

of ſeparating a few immaterial errors, from a juſt and judicious repreſentation, might not my reſpect for the name and merit of Moſheim, have claimed ſome indulgence? But I diſdain thoſe excuſes, which only a candid adverſary would allow. I can meet Mr. Davis on the hard ground of controverſy, and retort on his own head the charge of concealing a part of the truth. He himſelf has dared to ſuppreſs the words of my text, which immediately followed his quotation. "Before that time the various "accidents of war and commerce might indeed "diffuſe an imperfect knowledge of the Goſpel "among the tribes of Caledonia, and among "the borderers of the Rhine, the Danube, "and the Euphrates;" and Mr. Davis has likewiſe ſuppreſſed one of the juſtificatory Notes on this paſſage, which expreſsly points out the time and circumſtances of the firſt Gothic converſions. Theſe exceptions, which I had cautiouſly inſerted, and Mr. Davis has cautiouſly concealed, are ſuperfluous for the provinces of Thrace, Mæſia, and the Leſſer Armenia, which were contained within the precincts of the Roman Empire. They allow an ample ſcope for the more early converſion of ſome independent diſtricts of Dacia and the Greater Armenia, which bordered on the Danube and Euphrates; and the entire ſenſe of this paſſage, which Mr.

Davis first mutilates and then attacks, is perfectly consistent with the original text of the learned Mosheim.

And yet I will fairly confess, that, after a nicer inquiry into the epoch of the Armenian Church, I am not satisfied with the accuracy of my own expression. The assurance that the first Christian King, and the first Archbishop, Tiridates, and St. Gregory the Illuminator, were still alive several years after the death of Constantine, inclined me to believe, that the conversion of Armenia was posterior to the auspicious Revolution, which had given the sceptre of Rome to the hands of an orthodox Emperor. But I had not enough considered the two following circumstances. 1. I might have recollected the dates assigned by Moses of Chorene, who, on this occasion, may be regarded as a competent witness. Tiridates ascended the throne of Armenia in the third year of Diocletian (Hist. Armeniæ, l. ii. c. 79. p. 207.), and St. Gregory, who was invested with the Episcopal character in the seventeenth year of Tiridates, governed almost thirty years the Church of Armenia, and disappeared from the world in the forty-sixth year of the reign of the same Prince. (Hist. Armeniæ, l. ii. c. 88. p. 224, 225.) The consecration of St. Gregory must therefore be placed A. D. 303, and

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the converſion of the King and kingdom was ſoon atchieved by that ſucceſsful miſſionary. 2. The unjuſt and inglorious war which Maximin undertook againſt the Armenians, the ancient faithful allies of the Republic, was evidently derived from a motive of ſuperſtitious zeal. The hiſtorian Euſebius (Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. ix. c. 8. p. 448. edit. Cantab.) conſiders the pious Armenians as a nation of Chriſtians, who bravely defended themſelves from the hoſtile oppreſſion of an idolatrous tyrant. Inſtead of maintaining "that the converſion of Armenia "was not attempted with any degree of ſucceſs "till the ſcepter was in the hands of an ortho-"dox Emperor," I ought to have obſerved, that the ſeeds of the faith were deeply ſown during the ſeaſon of the laſt and greateſt perſecution, that many Roman exiles might aſſiſt the labours of Gregory, and that the renowned Tiridates, the hero of the Eaſt, may diſpute with Conſtantine the honour of being the firſt Sovereign who embraced the Chriſtian religion.

In a future edition, I ſhall rectify an expreſſion which, in ſtrictneſs, can only be applied to the kingdoms of Iberia and Æthiopia. Had the error been expoſed by Mr. Davis himſelf, I ſhould not have been aſhamed to correct it; but *I am* aſhamed at being reduced to contend

with an adverſary who is unable to diſcover, or to improve, his own advantages.

But, inſtead of proſecuting any inquiry from whence the Public might have gained inſtruction, and himſelf credit, Mr. Davis chuſes to perplex his readers with ſome angry cavils about the progreſs of the Goſpel in the ſecond century. What does he mean to eſtabliſh or to refute? Have I denied, that before the end of that period Chriſtianity was very widely diffuſed both in the Eaſt and in the Weſt? Has not Juſtin Martyr affirmed, without exception or limitation, that it was already preached to *every* nation on the face of the earth? Is that propoſition true at preſent? Could it be true in the time of Juſtin? Does not Moſheim acknowledge the exaggeration? "Demus, nec enim "quæ in oculos incurrunt infitiari audemus, "eſſe in his verbis exaggerationis nonnihil. "Certum enim eſt diu poſt Juſtini ætatem, "multas orbis terrarum gentes cognitione "Chriſti caruiſſe." (Moſheim de Rebus Chriſtianis, p. 203.) Does he not expoſe (p. 205.), with becoming ſcorn and indignation, the falſehood and vanity of the hyperboles of Tertullian? "bonum hominem æſtu imaginationis "elatum non ſatis adtendiſſe ad ea quæ litteris "conſignabat."

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The high eſteem which Mr. Davis expreſſes for the writings of Moſheim, would alone convince me how little he has read them, ſince he muſt have been perpetually offended and diſguſted by a train of thinking, the moſt repugnant to his own. His jealouſy, however, for the honour of Moſheim, provokes him to arraign the boldneſs of Mr. Gibbon who preſumes *falſely* to charge ſuch an eminent man with *unjuſtifiable aſſertions* [9]. I might obſerve, that my ſtyle, which on this occaſion was more modeſt and moderate, has acquired, perhaps undeſignedly, an illiberal caſt from the rough hand of Mr. Davis. But as my veracity is impeached, I may be leſs ſolicitous about my politeneſs; and though I have repeatedly declined the faireſt opportunities of correcting the errors of my predeceſſors, yet, as long as I have truth on my ſide, I am not eaſily daunted by the names of the moſt eminent men.

The aſſertion of Moſheim, which did not ſeem to be juſtified [1] by the authority of Lactantius, was, that the wife and daughter of Diocletian, Priſca and *Valeria*, had been privately *baptized*. Mr. Davis is ſure that the words of Moſheim, "Chriſtianis ſacris clam "initiata," need not be confined to the rite

[9] Davis, p. 131. [1] Gibbon, p. 676, Note 132.

of

of baptiſm; and he is equally ſure, that the reference to Moſheim does not lead us to diſcover even the name of Valeria. In both theſe aſſurances he is groſsly miſtaken; but it is the misfortune of controverſy, that an error may be committed in three or four words, which cannot be rectified in leſs than thirty or forty lines.

1. The true and the ſole meaning of the Chriſtian initiation, one of the familiar and favourite alluſions of the Fathers of the fourth century, is clearly explained by the exact and laborious Bingham. "The baptized were "alſo ſtyled οἱ μεμυημενοι, which the Latins "call *initiati*, the initiated, that is, admitted to "the uſe of the *ſacred* offices, and knowledge "of the *ſacred* myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion. "Hence came that form of ſpeaking ſo frequently uſed by St. Chryſoſtom, and other "ancient writers, when they touched upon "any doctrines or myſteries which the Catechumens underſtood not, ισασιν οἱ μεμυημενοι, "the initiated know what is ſpoken. St. "Ambroſe writes a book to theſe *initiati*; "Iſidore of Peluſium and Heſychius call "them μυσται and μυσταγωγητοι. Whence the "Catechumens have the contrary names, "Αμυστοι, Αμυητοι, Αμυσταγωγητοι, the uninitiated or unbaptized." (Antiquities of the

Chriſtian Church, l. i. c. 4. N°. 2. vol. i. p. 11. fol. edit.) Had I preſumed to ſuppoſe that Moſheim was capable of employing a technical expreſſion in a looſe and equivocal ſenſe, I ſhould indeed have violated the reſpect which I have always entertained for his learning and abilities.

2. But Mr. Davis cannot diſcover in the text of Moſheim the name of Valeria. In that caſe Moſheim would have ſuffered another ſlight inaccuracy to drop from his pen, as the paſſage of Lactantius, "ſacrificio pollui coë-"git," on which he founds his aſſertion, includes the names both of Priſca and Valeria. But I am not reduced to the neceſſity of accuſing another in my own defence. Moſheim has properly and expreſsly declared that Valeria imitated the pious example of her mother Priſca, "Gener Diocletiani uxorem habebat *Vale-*"*riam* matris exemplum pietate erga Deum "imitantem et a cultu fictorum Numinum "alienam." (Moſheim, p. 913.) Mr. Davis has a bad habit of greedily ſnapping at the firſt words of a reference, without giving himſelf the trouble of going to the end of the page or paragraph.

Theſe trifling and peeviſh cavils would, perhaps, have been confounded with ſome criticiſms of the ſame ſtamp, on which I had beſtowed a

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ſlight, though ſufficient notice, in the beginning of this article of Moſheim; had not my attention been awakened by a peroration worthy of Tertullian himſelf, if Tertullian had been devoid of eloquence as well as of moderation—"Much leſs does the Chriſtian Moſheim give "our *infidel Hiſtorian* any pretext for inſerting "that *illiberal malignant inſinuation*, "That "Chriſtianity has, in every age, acknowledged "its important obligations to FEMALE devo-"tion;" the remark is truly *contemptible*[2]."

It is not my deſign to fill whole pages with a tedious enumeration of the many illuſtrious examples of female Saints, who, in every age, and almoſt in every country, have promoted the intereſt of Chriſtianity. Such inſtances will readily offer themſelves to thoſe who have the ſlighteſt knowledge of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; nor is it neceſſary that I ſhould remind them how much the charms, the influence, the devotion of Clotilda, and of her great-grand-daughter Bertha, contributed to the converſion of France and England. Religion may accept, without a bluſh, the ſervices of the pureſt and moſt gentle portion of the human ſpecies: but there are ſome advocates who would diſgrace Chriſtianity, if Chriſtianity

[2] Davis, p. 132.

could

could be disgraced, by the manner in which they defend her cause.

XV.

As I could not readily procure the works of Gregory of Nyssa, I borrowed[3] from the accurate and indefatigable Tillemont, a passage in the Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-worker, which affirmed that when the Saint took possession of his Episcopal See, he found only SEVENTEEN *Christians* in the city of Neo-Cæsarea, and the adjacent country, "Les "environs, la Campagne, le pays d'alentour." (Mem. Eccles. Tom. iv. p. 677. 691. Edit. Bruxelles, 1706). These expressions of Tillemont, to whom I explicitly acknowledged my obligation, appeared synonymous to the word *Diocese*, the whole territory intrusted to the pastoral care of the Wonder-worker, and I added the epithet of *extensive*; because I was apprised that Neo-Cæsarea was the capital of the Polemoniac Pontus, and that the whole kingdom of Pontus, which stretched above five hundred miles along the coast of the Euxine, was divided between sixteen or seventeen Bishops. (See the Geographia Ecclesiastica of Charles de St. Paul, and Lucas Holstenius, TILLEMONT.

[3] Gibbon, p. 605. N. 156.

p. 249, 250, 251.) Thus far I may not be thought to have deſerved any cenſure; but the omiſſion of the ſubſequent part of the ſame paſſage, which imports that at his death the Wonder-worker left no more than *ſeventeen Pagans*, may ſeem to wear a partial and ſuſpicious aſpect.

Let me therefore firſt obſerve, as ſome evidence of an impartial diſpoſition, that I *eaſily* admitted, as the cool obſervation of the philoſophic Lucian, the angry and intereſted complaint of the falſe prophet Alexander, that Pontus was filled with Chriſtians. This complaint was made under the reigns of Marcus or of Commodus, with whom the impoſtor ſo admirably expoſed by Lucian was contemporary: and I had contented myſelf with remarking, that the numbers of Chriſtians muſt have been very unequally diſtributed in the ſeveral parts of Pontus, ſince the dioceſe of Neo-Cæſarea contained, above ſixty years afterwards, only ſeventeen Chriſtians. Such was the inconſiderable flock which Gregory began to feed about the year two hundred and forty, and the real or fabulous converſions aſcribed to that Wonder-working Biſhop during a reign of thirty years, are totally foreign to the ſtate of Chriſtianity in the preceding century. This obvious reflection may ſerve to anſwer the

the objection of Mr. Davis[4], and of another adverſary[5], who on this occaſion is more liberal than Mr. Davis of thoſe harſh epithets ſo familiar to the tribe of Polemics.

XVI.

" Mr. Gibbon ſays[6], " Pliny was ſent into " Bithynia (according to Pagi) in the year " 110." PAGI.

" Now that accurate Chronologer places it " in the year 102. See the fact *recorded* in his " Critica-Hiſtorico-Chronologica in Annales " C. Baronii, A. D. 102. p. 99. ſæc. ii. " § 3."

" I appeal to my reader, Whether this " anachroniſm does not plainly prove that " our Hiſtorian never looked into Pagi's " Chronology, though he has not heſitated to " make a pompous reference to him in his " note[7]?"

I cannot help obſerving, that either Mr. Davis's Dictionary is extremely confined, or that in his Philoſophy all ſins are of equal magnitude. Every error of fact or language, every inſtance where he does not know to re-

[4] Davis, p. 136, 137.
[5] Dr. Randolph, in Chelſum's Remarks, p. 159, 160.
[6] Gibbon, p. 605. N. 157. [7] Davis, p. 140.

concile the original and the reference, he expreſſes by the gentle word of *miſrepreſentation.* An inaccurate appeal to the ſentiment of Pagi, on a ſubject where I muſt have been perfectly diſintereſted, might have been ſtyled a lapſe of memory, inſtead of being cenſured as the effect of vanity and ignorance. Pagi is neither a difficult nor an uncommon writer, nor could I hope to derive much additional fame from a *pompous* quotation of his writings, which I had never ſeen.

The words employed by Mr. Davis, of *fact*, of *record*, of *anachroniſm*, are unſkilfully choſen, and ſo unhappily applied, as to betray a very ſhameful ignorance, either of the Engliſh language, or of the nature of this Chronological Queſtion. The date of Pliny's government of Bithynia is not a fact recorded by any ancient writer, but an opinion which modern critics have variouſly formed, from the conſideration of preſumptive and collateral evidence. Cardinal Baronius placed the conſulſhip of Pliny one year too late; and, as he was perſuaded that the old practice of the republic ſtill ſubſiſted, he naturally ſuppoſed that Pliny obtained his province immediately after the expiration of his conſulſhip. He therefore ſends him into Bithynia in the year which, according to his erroneous computation, coincided

incided with the year one hundred and four (Baron. Annal. Eccleſ. A. D. 103. N° 1. 104. N° 1), or, according to the true chronology, with the year one hundred and two, of the Chriſtian Æra. This miſtake of Baronius, Pagi, with the aſſiſtance of his friend Cardinal Noris, undertakes to correct. From an accurate parallel of the Annals of Trajan and the Epiſtles of Pliny, he deduces his proofs that Pliny remained at Rome ſeveral years after his Conſulſhip; by his own ingenious, though ſometimes fanciful theory, of the imperial Quinquennalia, &c. Pagi at laſt diſcovers that Pliny made his entrance into Bithynia in the year one hundred and ten. "Plinius igitur anno Chriſti CENTESIMO DECIMO Bithyniam intravit." Pagi, tom. i. p. 100.

I will be more indulgent to my adverſary than he has been to me: I will admit, that he has *looked into Pagi*; but I muſt add, that he has only looked into that accurate Chronologer. To rectify the errors, which, in the courſe of a laborious and original work, had eſcaped the diligence of the Cardinal, was the arduous taſk which Pagi propoſed to execute: and for the ſake of perſpicuity, he diſtributes his criticiſms according to the particular dates, whether juſt or faulty, of the Chronology of Baronius himſelf.

ſelf. Under the year 102, Mr. Davis confuſedly ſaw a long argument about Pliny and Bithynia, and without condeſcending to read the Author whom he *pompouſly* quotes, this haſty Critic imputes to him the opinion which he had ſo laborioufly deſtroyed.

My readers, if any readers have accompanied me thus far, muſt be ſatisfied, and indeed ſatiated, with the repeated proofs which I have made of the weight and temper of my adverſary's weapons. They have, in every aſſault, fallen dead and lifeleſs to the ground: they have more than once recoiled, and dangerouſly wounded the unſkilful hand that had preſumed to uſe them. I have now examined all the *miſrepreſentations* and *inaccuracies*, which even for a moment could perplex the ignorant, or deceive the credulous: the *few* imputations which I have neglected, are ſtill more palpably falſe, or ſtill more evidently trifling, and even the friends of Mr. Davis will ſcarcely continue to aſcribe my contempt to my fear.

PLAGIARISMS.

The firſt part of his Critical Volume might admit, though it did not deſerve, a particular reply. But the eaſy, though tedious compilation, which fills the remainder[s], and which Mr. Davis has produced as the evidence of my ſhameful *plagiariſms*, may be ſet in its true

[s] Davis, p. 168—274.

light

light by three or four ſhort and general reflexions.

I. Mr. Davis has diſpoſed, in two columns, the paſſages which he thinks proper to ſelect from my Two laſt Chapters, and the correſponding paſſages from Middleton, Barbeyrac, Beauſobre, Dodwell, &c., to the moſt important of which he had been regularly guided by my own quotations. According to the opinion which he has conceived of literary property, to *agree* is to *follow*, and to *follow* is to *ſteal*. He celebrates his own ſagacity with loud and reiterated applauſe, and declares with infinite facetiouſneſs, that if he reſtored to every author the paſſages which Mr. Gibbon has purloined, *he* would appear as naked as the proud and gaudy Daw in the Fable, when each bird had plucked away its own plumes. Inſtead of being angry with Mr. Davis for the parallel which he has extended to ſo great a length, I am under ſome obligation to his induſtry for the copious proofs which he has furniſhed the reader, that my repreſentation of ſome of the moſt important facts of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity, is ſupported by the authority or opinion of the moſt ingenious and learned of the modern writers. The Public may not, perhaps, be very eager to aſſiſt Mr. Davis in his favourite amuſement of *depluming* me.

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They may think, that if the materials which compoſe my Two laſt Chapters are curious and valuable, it is of little moment to whom they properly belong. If my readers are ſatisfied with the form, the colours, the new arrangement which I have given to the labours of my predeceſſors, they may perhaps conſider me not as a contemptible Thief, but as an honeſt and induſtrious Manufacturer, who has fairly procured the raw materials, and worked them up with a laudable degree of ſkill and ſucceſs.

II. About two hundred years ago, the Court of Rome diſcovered that the ſyſtem which had been erected by ignorance muſt be defended and countenanced by the aid, or at leaſt by the abuſe, of ſcience. The groſſer legends of the middle ages were abandoned to contempt, but the ſupremacy and infallibility of two hundred Popes, the virtues of many thouſand Saints, and the miracles which they either performed or related, have been laborioufly conſecrated in the Eccleſiaſtical Annals of Cardinal Baronius. A Theological Barometer might be formed, of which the Cardinal and our countryman Dr. Middleton ſhould conſtitute the oppoſite and remote extremities, as the former ſunk to the loweſt degree of credulity, which was compatible with learning, and the latter roſe to the higheſt pitch of ſcepticiſm, in any

wiſe conſiſtent with Religion. The intermediate gradations would be filled by a line of eccleſiaſtical critics, whoſe rank has been fixed by the circumſtances of their temper and ſtudies, as well as by the ſpirit of the church or ſociety to which they were attached. It would be amuſing enough to calculate the weight of prejudice in the air of Rome, of Oxford, of Paris, and of Holland; and ſometimes to obſerve the irregular tendency of Papiſts towards freedom, ſometimes to remark the unnatural gravitation of Proteſtants towards ſlavery. But it is uſeful to borrow the aſſiſtance of ſo many learned and ingenious men, who have viewed the firſt ages of the church in every light, and from every ſituation. If we ſkilfully combine the paſſions and prejudices, the hoſtile motives and intentions, of the ſeveral theologians, we may frequently extract knowledge from credulity, moderation from zeal, and impartial truth from the moſt diſingenuous controverſy. It is the right, it is the duty of a critical hiſtorian to collect, to weigh, to ſelect the opinions of his predeceſſors; and the more diligence he has exerted in the ſearch, the more rationally he may hope to add ſome improvement to the ſtock of knowledge, the uſe of which has been common to all.

III. Beſides the ideas which may be ſuggeſted by the ſtudy of the moſt learned and ingenious of the moderns, the hiſtorian may be indebted to them for the occaſional communication of ſome paſſages of the ancients, which might otherwiſe have eſcaped his knowledge or his memory. In the conſideration of any extenſive ſubject, none will pretend to have read all that has been written, or to recollect all that they have read: nor is there any diſgrace in recurring to the writers who have profeſſedly treated any queſtions, which, in the courſe of a long narrative, we are called upon to mention in a ſlight and incidental manner. If I touch upon the obſcure and fanciful theology of the Gnoſtics, I can accept without a bluſh the aſſiſtance of the candid Beauſobre; and when, amidſt the fury of contending parties, I trace the progreſs of eccleſiaſtical dominion, I am not aſhamed to confeſs myſelf the grateful diſciple of the impartial Moſheim. In the next Volume of my Hiſtory, the Reader and the Critic muſt prepare themſelves to ſee me make a ſtill more liberal uſe of the labours of thoſe indefatigable workmen who have dug deep into the mine of antiquity. The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries are far more voluminous than their predeceſſors; the writings of Jerom, of Auguſtin, of Chryſoſtom, &c.

cover the walls of our libraries. The ſmalleſt part is of the hiſtorical kind: yet the treatiſes which ſeem the leaſt to invite the curioſity of the reader, frequently conceal very uſeful hints, or very valuable facts. The polemic, who involves himſelf and his antagoniſts in a cloud of argumentation, ſometimes relates the origin and progreſs of the hereſy which he confutes; and the preacher who declaims againſt the luxury, deſcribes the manners, of the age; and ſeaſonably introduces the mention of ſome public calamity, that he may aſcribe it to the juſtice of offended Heaven. It would ſurely be unreaſonable to expect that the hiſtorian ſhould peruſe enormous volumes, with the uncertain hope of extracting a few intereſting lines, or that he ſhould ſacrifice whole days to the momentary amuſement of his Reader. Fortunately for us both, the diligence of eccleſiaſtical critics has facilitated our inquiries: the compilations of Tillemont might alone be conſidered as an immenſe repertory of truth and fable, of almoſt all that the Fathers have preſerved, or invented, or believed; and if we equally avail ourſelves of the labours of contending ſectaries, we ſhall often diſcover, that the ſame paſſages which the prudence of one of the diſputants would have ſuppreſſed or diſguiſed, are placed in the moſt conſpicuous

light by the active and intereſted zeal of his adverſary. On theſe occaſions, what is the duty of a faithful hiſtorian, who derives from ſome modern writer the knowledge of ſome ancient teſtimony, which he is deſirous of introducing into his own narrative? It is his duty, and it has been my invariable practice, to conſult the original; to ſtudy with attention the words, the deſign, the ſpirit, the context, the ſituation of the paſſage to which I had been referred; and, before I appropriated it to my own uſe, to juſtify my own declaration, "that I had carefully examined all the origi-"nal materials that could illuſtrate the ſubject "which I had undertaken to treat." If this important obligation has ſometimes been imperfectly fulfilled, I have only omitted what it would have been impracticable for me to perform. The greateſt city in the world is ſtill deſtitute of that uſeful inſtitution, a public library; and the writer who has undertaken to treat any large hiſtorical ſubject, is reduced to the neceſſity of purchaſing, for his private uſe, a numerous and valuable collection of the books which muſt form the baſis of his work. The diligence of his bookſellers will not always prove ſucceſsful; and the candour of his readers will not *always* expect, that, for the ſake of verifying an accidental quotation of ten lines, he

ſhould

ſhould load himſelf with an uſeleſs and expenſive ſeries of ten volumes. In a very few inſtances, where I had not the opportunity of conſulting the originals, I have adopted their teſtimony on the faith of modern guides, of whoſe fidelity I was ſatisfied; but on theſe occaſions [q], inſtead of decking myſelf with the borrowed plumes of Tillemont or Lardner, I have been moſt ſcrupulouſly exact in marking the extent of my reading, and the ſource of my information. This diſtinction, which a ſenſe of truth and modeſty had engaged me to expreſs, is ungenerouſly abuſed by Mr. Davis, who ſeems happy to inform his readers, that "in ONE inſtance (Chap. xvi. 164. or, in the "firſt edition, 163.) I have, by an unaccountable overſight, unfortunately for myſelf, for"got to drop the modern, and that I modeſtly "diſclaim all knowledge of Athanaſius, but what "I had picked up from Tillemont [r]." Without animadverting on the decency of theſe expreſſions, which are now grown familiar to me, I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that as I had frequently quoted Euſebius, or Cyprian, or Tertullian, *becauſe* I had read them; ſo, in this inſtance, I only made my reference to Tillemont,

[q] Gibbon, p. 605, N. 156; p. 606, N. 161; p. 690, N. 164; p. 699, N. 178.

[r] Davis, p. 273.

lemont, *becauſe* I had not read, and did not poſſeſs, the works of Athanaſius. The progreſs of my undertaking has ſince directed me to peruſe the Hiſtorical Apologies of the Archbiſhop of Alexandria, whoſe life is a very intereſting part of the age in which he lived; and if Mr. Davis ſhould have the curioſity to look into my Second Volume, he will find that I make a free and frequent appeal to the writings of Athanaſius. Whatever may be the opinion or practice of my adverſary, this I apprehend to be the dealing of a fair and honourable man.

IV. The hiſtorical monuments of the three firſt centuries of eccleſiaſtical antiquity are neither very numerous, nor very prolix. From the end of the Acts of the Apoſtles, to the time when the firſt Apology of Juſtin Martyr was preſented, there intervened a dark and doubtful period of fourſcore years; and, even if the Epiſtles of Ignatius ſhould be approved by the critic, they could not be very ſerviceable to the hiſtorian. From the middle of the ſecond, to the beginning of the fourth, century, we gain our knowledge of the ſtate and progreſs of Chriſtianity from the ſucceſſive Apologies which were occaſionally compoſed by Juſtin, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, *&c.*; from the Epiſtles of Cyprian; from a few *ſincere* acts

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of the Martyrs; from ſome moral or controverſial tracts, which indirectly explain the events and manners of the times; from the rare and accidental notice which profane writers have taken of the Chriſtian ſect; from the declamatory Narrative which celebrates the deaths of the perſecutors; and from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Euſebius, who has preſerved ſome valuable fragments of more early writers. Since the revival of letters, theſe original materials have been the common fund of critics and hiſtorians: nor has it ever been imagined, that the abſolute and excluſive property of a paſſage in Euſebius or Tertullian was acquired by the firſt who had an opportunity of quoting it. The learned work of Moſheim, *de Rebus Chriſtianis ante Conſtantinum*, was printed in the year 1753; and if I were poſſeſſed of the patience and diſingenuity of Mr. Davis, I would engage to find all the ancient teſtimonies that he has alleged, in the writings of Dodwell or Tillemont, which were publiſhed before the end of the laſt century. But if I were animated by any malevolent intentions againſt Dodwell or Tillemont, I could as eaſily, and as unfairly, fix on *them* the guilt of Plagiariſm, by producing the ſame paſſages tranſcribed or tranſlated at full length in the Annals of Cardinal Baronius. Let not criticiſm be any longer diſ-

graced

graced by the practice of ſuch unworthy arts. Inſtead of admitting ſuſpicions as falſe as they are ungenerous, candour will acknowledge, that Moſheim or Dodwell, Tillemont or Baronius, enjoyed the ſame right, and often were under the ſame obligation, of quoting the paſſages which they had read, and which were indiſpenſably requiſite to confirm the truth and ſubſtance of their ſimilar narratives. Mr. Davis is ſo far from allowing me the benefit of this common indulgence, or rather of this common right, that he ſtigmatizes with the name of *Plagiariſm* a cloſe and literal agreement with Dodwell in the account of ſome parts of the perſecution of Diocletian, where a few chapters of Euſebius and Lactantius, perhaps of Lactantius alone, are the ſole materials from whence our knowledge could be derived, and where, if I had not tranſcribed, I muſt have invented. He is even bold enough (*bold* is not the *proper* word) to conceive ſome hopes of perſuading his readers that an Hiſtorian who has employed ſeveral years of his life, and ſeveral hundred pages, on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, had never read Oroſius, or the Auguſtan Hiſtory; and that he was forced to borrow, at ſecond-hand, his quotations from the Theodoſian Code. I cannot profeſs myſelf very deſirous of Mr. Davis's acquaintance;

quaintance; but if he will take the trouble of calling at my houſe any afternoon when I am *not* at home, my ſervant ſhall ſhew him my library, which he will find tolerably well furniſhed with the uſeful authors, ancient as well as modern, eccleſiaſtical as well as profane, who have *directly* ſupplied me with the materials of my Hiſtory.

The peculiar reaſons, and they are not of the moſt flattering kind, which urged me to repel the furious and feeble attack of Mr. Davis, have been already mentioned. But ſince I am drawn thus reluctantly into the liſts of controverſy, I ſhall not retire till I have ſaluted, either with ſtern defiance or gentle courteſy, the theological champions who have ſignalized their ardour to break a lance againſt the ſhield of a *Pagan* adverſary. The Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters have been honoured with the notice of ſeveral writers, whoſe names and characters ſeemed to promiſe more maturity of judgment and learning than could reaſonably be expected from the unfiniſhed ſtudies of a Batchelor of Arts. The Reverend Mr. Apthorpe, Dr. Watſon, the Regius Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of Cambridge, Dr. Chelſum of Chriſt Church, and his aſſociate Dr. Randolph, Preſident of Corpus Chriſti

College, and the Lady Margaret's Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of Oxford, have given me a fair right, which, however, I ſhall not abuſe, of freely declaring my opinion on the ſubject of their reſpective criticiſms.

Mr. Apthorpe. If I am not miſtaken, Mr. Apthorpe was the firſt who announced to the Public his intention of examining the intereſting ſubject which I had treated in the Two laſt Chapters of my Hiſtory. The multitude of collateral and acceſſary ideas which preſented themſelves to the Author, inſenſibly ſwelled the bulk of his papers to the ſize of a large volume in octavo; the publication was delayed many months beyond the time of the firſt advertiſement; and when Mr. Apthorpe's Letters appeared, I was ſurpriſed to find, that I had *ſcarcely* any intereſt or concern in their contents. They are filled with general obſervations on the Study of Hiſtory, with a large and uſeful catalogue of Hiſtorians, and with a variety of reflections, moral and religious, all preparatory to the direct and formal conſideration of my Two laſt Chapters, which Mr. Apthorpe ſeems to reſerve for the ſubject of a Second Volume. I ſincerely reſpect the learning, the piety, and the candour of this Gentleman, and muſt conſider it as a mark of his eſteem, that he has thought proper to begin his approaches at ſo great

great a diſtance from the fortifications which he deſigned to attack.

When Dr. Watſon gave to the Public his Apology for Chriſtianity, in a Series of Letters, he addreſſed them to the Author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, with a juſt confidence that he had conſidered this important object in a manner not unworthy of his antagoniſt or of himſelf. Dr. Watſon's mode of thinking bears a liberal and philoſophic caſt; his thoughts are expreſſed with ſpirit, and that ſpirit is always tempered by politeneſs and moderation. Such is the man whom I ſhould be happy to call my friend, and whom I ſhould not bluſh to call my antagoniſt. But the ſame motives which might tempt me to accept, or even to ſolicit, a private and amicable conference, diſſuaded me from entering into a public controverſy with a Writer of ſo reſpectable a character; and I embraced the earlieſt opportunity of expreſſing to Dr. Watſon himſelf, how ſincerely I agreed with him in thinking, "That as the world is "now poſſeſſed of the opinion of us both upon "the ſubject in queſtion, it may be perhaps "as proper for us both to leave it in this "ſtate[2]." The nature of the ingenious Pro- DR. WATSON.

[2] Watſon's Apology for Chriſtianity, p. 200.

feſſor's Apology contributed to ſtrengthen the inſuperable reluctance to engage in hoſtile altercation which was common to us both, by convincing me, that ſuch an altercation was unneceſſary as well as unpleaſant. He very juſtly and politely declares, that a conſiderable part, near ſeventy pages, of his ſmall volume are not directed to me[3], but to a ſet of men whom he places in an odious and contemptible light. He leaves to other hands the defence of the leading Eccleſiaſtics, even of the primitive church; and without being *very* anxious, either to ſoften their vices and indiſcretion, or to aggravate the cruelty of the Heathen Perſecutors, he paſſes over in ſilence the greateſt part of my Sixteenth Chapter. It is not ſo much the purpoſe of the Apologiſt to examine the facts which have been advanced by the Hiſtorian, as to remove the impreſſions which may have been formed by many of his Readers; and the remarks of Dr. Watſon conſiſt more properly of general argumentation than of particular criticiſm. He fairly owns, that I have expreſsly allowed the full and irreſiſtible weight of the *firſt* great cauſe of the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity[4], and he is too candid to deny

[3] Watſon's Apology for Chriſtianity, p. 202—268.
[4] Id. p. 5.

that

that the five *ſecondary* cauſes, which I had attempted to explain, operated with *ſome* degree of active energy towards the accompliſhment of that great event. The only queſtion which remains between us, relates to the *degree* of the weight and effect of thoſe ſecondary cauſes; and as I am perſuaded that our philoſophy is not of the dogmatic kind, we ſhould ſoon acknowledge that this preciſe degree cannot be aſcertained by reaſoning, nor perhaps be expreſſed by words. In the courſe of this inquiry, ſome incidental difficulties have ariſen, which I had ſtated with impartiality, and which Dr. Watſon reſolves with ingenuity and temper. If in ſome inſtances he ſeems to have miſapprehended my ſentiments, I may heſitate whether I ſhould impute the fault to my own want of clearneſs or to his want of attention, but I can never entertain a ſuſpicion that Dr. Watſon would deſcend to employ the diſingenuous arts of vulgar controverſy.

There is, however, one paſſage, and one paſſage only, which muſt not paſs without ſome explanation; and I ſhall the more eagerly embrace this occaſion to illuſtrate what I had ſaid, as the miſconſtruction of my true meaning ſeems to have made an involuntary, but unfavourable, impreſſion on the liberal mind of Dr. Watſon. As I endeavour *not* to palliate the

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ſeverity, but to diſcover the motives, of the Roman Magiſtrates, I had remarked, "it "was in vain that the oppreſſed Believer "aſſerted the unalienable rights of con- "ſcience and private judgment. Though his "ſituation might excite the pity, his argu- "ments could never reach the underſtanding, "either of the philoſophic or of the believing "part of the Pagan world[5]." The humanity of Dr. Watſon takes fire on the ſuppoſed provocation, and he aſks me with unuſual quickneſs, "How, Sir, are the arguments for liberty "of conſcience ſo exceedingly inconcluſive, "that you think them incapable of reaching "the underſtanding even of philoſophers[6]?" He continues to obſerve, that a captious adverſary would embrace with avidity the opportunity this paſſage *affords*, of blotting my character with the odious ſtain of being a Perſecutor; a ſtain which no learning can wipe out, which no genius or ability can render amiable; and though he himſelf does not entertain ſuch an opinion of my principles, his ingenuity tries in vain to provide me with the means of eſcape.

I muſt lament that I have not been ſucceſsful in the explanation of a very ſimple notion

[5] Gibbon, p. 625. [6] Watſon, p. 185.

of the ſpirit both of philoſophy and of polytheiſm, which I have repeatedly inculcated. The arguments which aſſert the rights of conſcience are not inconcluſive in themſelves, but the underſtanding of the Greeks and Romans was fortified againſt their evidence by an invincible prejudice. When we liſten to the voice of Bayle, of Locke, and of genuine reaſon, in favour of religious toleration, we ſhall eaſily perceive that our moſt forcible appeal is made to our mutual feelings. If the Jew were allowed to argue with the Inquiſitor, he would requeſt that for a moment they might exchange their different ſituations, and might ſafely aſk his Catholic Tyrant, whether the fear of death would compel *him* to enter the ſynagogue, to receive the mark of circumciſion, and to partake of the paſchal lamb. As ſoon as the caſe of perſecution was brought home to the breaſt of the Inquiſitor, he muſt have found ſome difficulty in ſuppreſſing the dictates of natural equity, which would inſinuate to his conſcience, that he could have no right to inflict thoſe puniſhments which, under ſimilar circumſtances, he would eſteem it as his duty to encounter. But this argument could not reach the underſtanding of a Polytheiſt, or of an ancient Philoſopher. The former was ready, whenever he was ſummoned, or indeed without

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out being ſummoned, to fall proſtrate before the altars of any Gods who were adored in any part of the world, and to admit a vague perſuaſion of the *truth* and divinity of the moſt different modes of religion. The Philoſopher, who conſidered them, at leaſt in their literal ſenſe, as equally *falſe* and abſurd, was not aſhamed to diſguiſe his ſentiments, and to frame his actions according to the laws of his country, which impoſed the ſame obligation on the Philoſophers and the people. When Pliny declared, that whatever was the opinion of the Chriſtians, their obſtinacy deſerved puniſhment, the abſurd cruelty of Pliny was excuſed in his own eye, by the conſciouſneſs that, in the ſituation of the Chriſtians, he would not have refuſed the religious compliance which he exacted. I ſhall not repeat, that the Pagan worſhip was a matter, not of *opinion*, but of *cuſtom*; that the toleration of the Romans was confined to nations or families who followed the practice of their anceſtors; and that in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity their perſecution of the individuals who departed from the eſtabliſhed religion was neither moderated by pure reaſon, nor inflamed by excluſive zeal. But I only deſire to appeal, from the haſty apprehenſion, to the more deliberate judgment, of Dr. Watſon himſelf. Should there ſtill remain

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any difference of opinion between us, I ſhall be ſatisfied, if he will conſider me as a ſincere, though perhaps unſucceſsful, lover of truth, and as a firm friend to civil and eccleſiaſtical freedom.

Dr. CHELSUM and Dr. RANDOLPH.

Far be it from me, or from any faithful Hiſtorian, to impute to reſpectable ſocieties the faults of ſome individual members. Our two Univerſities moſt undoubtedly contain the ſame mixture, and moſt probably the ſame proportions, of zeal and moderation, of reaſon and ſuperſtition. Yet there is much leſs difference between the ſmoothneſs of the Ionic, and the roughneſs of the Doric dialect, than may be found between the poliſhed ſtyle of Dr. Watſon, and the coarſe language of Mr. Davis, Dr. Chelſum, or Dr. Randolph. The ſecond of theſe Critics, Dr. Chelſum of Chriſt Church, is unwilling that the world ſhould forget that *he* was the firſt who ſounded to arms, that *he* was the firſt who furniſhed the antidote to the poiſon, and who, as early as the month of October of the year 1776, publiſhed his *Strictures* on the Two laſt Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's Hiſtory. The ſucceſs of a pamphlet, which he modeſtly ſtyles imperfect and ill-digeſted, encouraged him to reſume the controverſy. In the beginning of the preſent year, his Remarks made their ſecond appearance, with ſome

alteration of form, and a large increaſe of bulk; and the author who ſeems to fight under the protection of two epiſcopal banners, has prefixed, in the front of his volume, his name and titles, which in the former edition he had leſs honourably ſuppreſſed. His confidence is fortified by the alliance and communications of a *diſtinguiſhed* Writer, Dr. Randolph, *&c.* who, on a proper occaſion, would, no doubt, be ready to bear as honourable teſtimony to the merit and reputation of Dr. Chelſum. The two friends are indeed ſo happily united by art and nature, that if the author of the Remarks had not pointed out the valuable communications of the Margaret Profeſſor, it would have been impoſſible to ſeparate their reſpective property. Writers who poſſeſs any freedom of mind, may be known from each other by the peculiar character of their ſtyle and ſentiments; but the champions who are inliſted in the ſervice of Authority, commonly wear the uniform of the regiment. Oppreſſed with the ſame yoke, covered with the ſame trappings, they heavily move along, perhaps not with an equal pace, in the ſame beaten track of prejudice and preferment. Yet I ſhould expoſe my own injuſtice, were I abſolutely to confound with Mr. Davis the two Doctors in Divinity, who are joined in one volume. The three Critics

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appear to be animated by the ſame implacable reſentment againſt the Hiſtorian of the Roman Empire; they are alike diſpoſed to ſupport the ſame opinions by the ſame arts; and if in the language of the two latter, the diſregard of politeneſs is ſomewhat leſs groſs and indecent, the difference is not of ſuch a magnitude as to excite in my breaſt any lively ſenſations of gratitude. It was the misfortune of Mr. Davis that he undertook to *write* before he had *read*. He ſet out with the ſtock of authorities which he found in my quotations, and boldly ventured to play his reputation againſt mine. Perhaps he may now repent of a loſs which is not eaſily recovered; but if I had not ſurmounted my almoſt inſuperable reluctance to a public diſpute, many a reader might ſtill be dazzled by the vehemence of his aſſertions, and might ſtill believe that Mr. Davis had detected ſeveral wilful and important miſrepreſentations in my Two laſt Chapters. But the confederate Doctors appear to be ſcholars of a higher form and longer experience; they enjoy a certain rank in their academical world; and as their zeal is enlightened by ſome rays of knowledge, ſo their deſire to ruin the credit of their adverſary is occaſionally checked by the apprehenſion of injuring their own. Theſe reſtraints, to which Mr. Davis was a ſtranger, have con-

fined them to a very narrow and humble path of hiſtorical criticiſm; and if I were to correct, according to their wiſhes, all the particular facts againſt which they have advanced any objections, theſe corrections, admitted in their fulleſt extent, would hardly furniſh materials for a decent liſt of *errata*.

The *dogmatical* part of their work, which in every ſenſe of the word deſerves that appellation, is ill adapted to engage my attention. I had declined the conſideration of theological arguments, when they were managed by a candid and liberal adverſary; and it would be inconſiſtent enough, if I ſhould have refuſed to draw my ſword in honourable combat againſt the keen and well-tempered weapon of Dr. Watſon, for the ſole purpoſe of encountering the ruſtic cudgel of two ſtaunch and ſturdy Polemics.

I ſhall not enter any farther into the character and conduct of Cyprian, as I am ſenſible that, if the opinion of Le Clerc, Moſheim, and myſelf, is reprobated by Dr. Chelſum and his ally, the difference muſt ſubſiſt, till we ſhall entertain the ſame notions of moral virtue and eccleſiaſtical power[7]. If Dr. Randolph will allow that the primitive Clergy received,

[7] Gibbon, p. 558, 559. Chelſum, p. 132—139.

managed, and distributed the tythes, and other charitable donations of the faithful, the dispute between *us*, will be a dispute of words [8]. I shall not amuse myself with proving that the learned Origen must have derived from the *inspired* authority of the Church his knowledge, not indeed of the *authenticity*, but of the *inspiration* of the *four* Evangelists, *two* of whom are not in the rank of the Apostles [9]. I shall submit to the judgment of the Public, whether the Athanasian Creed is not read and received in the Church of England, and whether the wisest and most virtuous of the Pagans [1] believed the Catholic faith, which is declared in the Athanasian Creed to be absolutely necessary for salvation. As little shall I think myself interested in the elaborate disquisitions with which the Author of the Remarks has filled a great number of pages, concerning the famous testimony of Josephus, the passages of Irenæus and Theophilus, which relate to the gift of miracles, and the origin of circumcision in Palestine or in Egypt [2]. If I have rejected, and rejected with some contempt, the *interpolation* which pious fraud has very awkwardly inserted in the text

[8] Gibbon, p. 592. Randolph in Chelsum, p. 122.
[9] Gibbon, p. 551, Note 33. Chelsum, p. 39.
[1] Gibbon, p. 565, Note 70. Chelsum, p. 66.
[2] Chelsum's Remarks, p. 13—19. 67—91. 180—185.

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of Joſephus, I may deem myſelf ſecure behind the ſhield of learned and pious critics (See in particular Le Clerc, in his Ars Critica, part iii. ſect. i. c. 15. and Lardner's Teſtimonies, Vol. i. p. 150, &c.), who have condemned this paſſage: and I think it very natural that Dr. Chelſum ſhould embrace the contrary opinion, which is not deſtitute of able advocates. The paſſages of Irenæus and Theophilus were thoroughly ſifted in the controverſy about the duration of Miracles; and as the Works of Dr. Middleton may be found in every library, ſo it is not impoſſible that a diligent ſearch may ſtill diſcover ſome remains of the writings of his adverſaries. In mentioning the confeſſion of the Syrians of Paleſtine, that they had received from Egypt the rite of circumciſion, I had ſimply alleged the teſtimony of Herodotus, without expreſsly adopting the ſentiment of Marſham. But I had always imagined, that in theſe doubtful and indifferent queſtions, which have been ſolemnly argued before the tribunal of the Public, every ſcholar was at liberty to chuſe his ſide, without aſſigning his reaſons; nor can I yet perſuade myſelf, that either Dr. Chelſum, or myſelf, are likely to enforce, by any new arguments, the opinions which we have reſpectively followed. The only novelty for which I can perceive myſelf indebted to Dr. Chelſum, is

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the very extraordinary Scepticiſm which he inſinuates concerning the time of Herodotus, who, according to the chronology of ſome, flouriſhed during the time of the Jewiſh captivity [3]. Can it be neceſſary to inform a Divine, that the captivity which laſted ſeventy years, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, was terminated in the year 536 before Chriſt, by the edict which Cyrus publiſhed in the firſt year of his reign (Jeremiah, xxv. 11, 12. xxix. 10. Ezra, i. 1. &c. Uſher and Prideaux, under the years 606 and 536.)? Can it be neceſſary to inform a man of letters, that Herodotus was fifty-three years old at the commencement of the Peloponneſian war (Aulus Gellius, Noct. Attic. xv. 23. from the commentaries of Pamphila), and conſequently that he was born in the year before Chriſt 484, fifty-two years after the end of the Jewiſh captivity? As this well atteſted fact is not expoſed to the ſlighteſt doubt or difficulty, I am ſomewhat curious to learn the names of thoſe unknown authors, whoſe chronology Dr. Chelſum has allowed as the ſpecious foundation of a probable hypotheſis. The Author of the Remarks does not ſeem indeed to have cultivated, with much care or ſucceſs, the province of literary hiſtory; as

[3] Chelſum, p. 15.

a very

a very moderate acquaintance with that uſeful branch of knowledge would have ſaved him from a poſitive miſtake, much leſs excuſable than the doubt which he entertains about the time of Herodotus. He ſtyles Suidas "a "*Heathen* writer, who lived about the end of "the *tenth* century [4]." I admit the period which he aſſigns to Suidas; and which is well aſcertained by Dr. Bentley (See his Reply to Boyle, p. 22, 23.). We are led to fix this epoch, by the chronology which this *Heathen* writer has deduced from Adam, to the death of the emperor John Zimiſces, A. D. 975: and a crowd of paſſages might be produced, as the unanſwerable evidence of his Chriſtianity. But the moſt unanſwerable of all is the very date, which is not diſputed between us. The philoſophers who flouriſhed under Juſtinian (See Agathias, l. ii. p. 65, 66.), appear to have been the laſt of the Heathen writers: and the ancient religion of the Greeks was annihilated almoſt four hundred years before the birth of Suidas.

After this animadverſion, which is not intended either to inſult the failings of my Adverſary, or to provide a convenient excuſe for my own errors, I ſhall proceed to ſelect *two*

[4] Chelſum, p. 73.

important

important parts of Dr. Chelſum's Remarks, from which the candid reader may form ſome opinion of the whole. They relate to the military ſervice of the firſt Chriſtians, and to the hiſtorical character of Euſebius; and I ſhall review them with the leſs reluctance, as it may not be impoſſible to pick up ſomething curious and uſeful even in the barren waſte of controverſy.

I.

MILITARY SERVICE OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

In repreſenting the errors of the primitive Chriſtians, which flowed from an exceſs of virtue, I had obſerved, *that* they expoſed themſelves to the reproaches of the Pagans, by their obſtinate refuſal to take an active part in the civil adminiſtration, or military defence of the empire; *that* the objections of Celſus appear to have been mutilated by his adverſary Origen; and *that* the Apologiſts, to whom the public dangers were urged, returned obſcure and ambiguous anſwers, as they were unwilling to diſcloſe the true ground of their ſecurity, their opinion of the approaching end of the world[5]. In another place I had related, from the Acts of Ruinart, the action and puniſhment of the Centurion Marcellus, who was put to death for renouncing the ſervice in a public and ſeditious manner[6].

[5] Gibbon, p. 580, 581. [6] Id. p. 680.

On this occaſion Dr. Chelſum is extremely alert. He denies my facts, controverts my opinions, and, with a politeneſs worthy of Mr. Davis himſelf, inſinuates that I borrowed the ſtory of Marcellus, not from Ruinart, but from Voltaire. My learned Adverſary thinks it highly improbable that Origen ſhould dare to *mutilate* the objections of Celſus, "whoſe work "was, in all probability, extant at the time he "made this reply. In ſuch caſe, had he even "been inclined to treat his adverſary unfairly, "he muſt yet ſurely have been with-held from "the attempt, through the fear of detec-"tion[7]." The experience both of ancient and modern controverſy has indeed convinced me that this reaſoning, juſt and natural as it may ſeem, is totally inconcluſive, and that the generality of diſputants, eſpecially in religious conteſts, are of a much more daring and intrepid ſpirit. For the truth of this remark, I ſhall content myſelf with producing a recent and very ſingular example, in which Dr. Chelſum himſelf is perſonally intereſted. He charges[8] me with paſſing over in "ſilence the important "and unſuſpected teſtimony of a Heathen hiſ-"torian (Dion Caſſius) to the perſecution of "Domitian; and he affirms, that I have pro-

[7] Chelſum, p. 118, 119. [8] Id. p. 188.

"duced

" duced that teſtimony ſo far only as it relates " to Clemens and Domitilla; yet in the very " ſame paſſage follows immediately, that on " a like accuſation MANY OTHERS were alſo " condemned. Some of them were put to " death, others ſuffered the confiſcation of " their goods[9]." Although I ſhould not be aſhamed to undertake the apology of Nero or Domitian, if I thought them innocent of any particular crime with which zeal or malice had unjuſtly branded their memory; yet I ſhould indeed bluſh, if, in favour of tyranny, or even in favour of virtue, I had ſuppreſſed the truth and evidence of hiſtorical facts. But the Reader will feel ſome ſurpriſe, when he has convinced himſelf that, in the three editions of my Firſt Volume, after relating the death of Clemens, and the exile of Domitilla, I continue to allege the ENTIRE TESTIMONY of Dion, in the following words: " and ſentences either " of death, or of confiſcation, were pronounced " againſt a GREAT NUMBER OF PERSONS who " were involved in the SAME accuſation. The " guilt imputed to their charge, was that of " Atheiſm and Jewiſh manners; a ſingular " aſſociation of ideas which cannot with any " propriety be applied except to the Chriſtians,

[9] Gibbon, p. 645.

" as they were obſcurely and imperfectly " viewed by the magiſtrates and writers of " that period." Dr. Chelſum has not been deterred, by the fear of detection, from this ſcandalous mutilation of the popular work of a living adverſary. But Celſus had been dead above fifty years before Origen publiſhed his Apology; and the copies of an ancient work, inſtead of being inſtantaneouſly multiplied by the operation of the preſs, were ſeparately and ſlowly tranſcribed by the labour of the hand.

If any modern Divine ſhould ſtill maintain that the fidelity of Origen was ſecured by motives more honourable than the fear of detection, he may learn from Jerom the difference of the *gymnaſtic* and *dogmatic* ſtyles. Truth is the object of the one, Victory of the other; and the ſame arts which would diſgrace the ſincerity of the teacher, ſerve only to diſplay the ſkill of the diſputant. After juſtifying his own practice by that of the orators and philoſophers, Jerom defends himſelf by the more reſpectable authority of Chriſtian Apologiſts. " How many thouſand lines, ſays he, have " been compoſed againſt *Celſus* and Porphyry, " by *Origen*, Methodius, Euſebius, Apollinaris? " Conſider with what arguments, with what " ſlippery problems, they elude the inventions " of the Devil; and how in their controverſy

" with

" with the Gentiles, they are ſometimes oblig-
" ed to ſpeak, not what they really think, but
" what is moſt advantageous for the cauſe they
" defend." " Origenes, &c. multis verſuum
" millibus ſcribunt adverſus Celſum et Por-
" phyrium. Conſiderate quibus argumentis et
" quam lubricis problematibus diaboli ſpiritu
" contexta ſubvertunt: et quia interdum co-
" guntur loqui, non quod ſentiunt, ſed quod
" neceſſe eſt dicunt adverſus ea quæ dicunt
" Gentiles." (Pro Libris adverſ. Jovinian. Apolog. Tom. ii. p. 135.)

Yet Dr. Chelſum may ſtill aſk, and he has a right to aſk, why in this particular inſtance I ſuſpect the pious Origen of mutilating the objections of his adverſary. From a very obvious, and, in my opinion, a very deciſive, circumſtance. Celſus was a Greek philoſopher, the friend of Lucian; and I thought that, although he might ſupport error by ſophiſtry, he would not write nonſenſe in his own language. I renounce my ſuſpicion, if the moſt attentive reader is able to underſtand the deſign and purport of a paſſage which is given as a formal quotation from Celſus, and which begins with the following words: Ου μην και εκεινο ανεκτον εν λεγοντος, ως, &c. (Origen contr. Celſum, l. viii. p. 425. edit. Spencer, Cantab. 1677.) I have carefully inſpected the original, I have availed myſelf

myſelf of the learning of Spencer, and even Bouhereau (for I ſhall always diſclaim the abſurd and affected pedantry of uſing without ſcruple a Latin verſion, but of deſpiſing the aid of a French tranſlation), and the ill ſucceſs of my efforts has countenanced the ſuſpicion to which I ſtill adhere, with a juſt mixture of doubt and heſitation. Origen very boldly denies, that any of the Chriſtians have affirmed what is imputed to them by Celſus, in this unintelligible quotation; and it may eaſily be credited, that none had maintained what none can comprehend. Dr. Chelſum has produced the words of Origen; but on this occaſion there is a ſtrange ambiguity in the language of the modern Divine [1], as if he wiſhed to inſinuate what he dared not affirm; and every reader muſt conclude, from his ſtate of the queſtion, that Origen expreſsly denied the truth of the *accuſation* of Celſus, who had *accuſed* the Chriſtians of declining to aſſiſt their fellow-ſubjects in the military defence of the empire, aſſailed on every ſide by the arms of the Barbarians.

Will Dr. Chelſum juſtify to the world, can he juſtify to his own feelings, the abuſe which he has made even of the privileges of the Gymnaſtic ſtyle? Careleſs and haſty indeed muſt

[1] Chelſum, p. 118.

have

have been his peruſal of Origen, if he did not perceive that the ancient Apologiſt, who makes a ſtand on ſome incidental queſtion, admits the accuſation of his adverſary, that the Chriſtians *refuſed* to bear arms even at the command of their ſovereign. "και ε συςρατευομεθα μην αυτῳ, και επειγη." (Origen, l. viii. p. 427.) He endeavours to palliate this undutiful refuſal, by repreſenting that the Chriſtians had their peculiar camps, in which they inceſſantly combated for the ſafety of the emperor and the empire, by lifting up their right hands—in prayer. The Apologiſt ſeems to hope that his country will be ſatisfied with this ſpiritual aid, and dexterouſly confounding the colleges of Roman prieſts with the multitudes which ſwelled the Catholic Church, he claims for his brethren, in all the provinces, the exemption from military ſervice, which was enjoyed by the ſacerdotal order. But as this excuſe might not readily be allowed, Origen looks forwards with a lively faith to that auſpicious Revolution, which Celſus had rejected as impoſſible, when all the nations of the habitable earth, renouncing their paſſions and their arms, ſhould embrace the pure doctrines of the Goſpel, and lead a life of peace and innocence under the immediate protection of Heaven. The faith of Origen ſeems to be principally founded on

the predictions of the Prophet Zephaniah (See iii. 9, 10.); and he prudently obſerves, that the Prophets often ſpeak ſecret things (ἐν απορρητω λεγουσι, p. 426.), which may be underſtood by thoſe who can underſtand them; and that if this ſtupendous change cannot be effected while we retain our bodies, it may be accompliſhed as ſoon as we ſhall be releaſed from them. Such is the reaſoning of Origen: though I have not followed the order, I have faithfully preſerved the ſubſtance, of it; which fully juſtifies the truth and propriety of my obſervations.

The execution of Marcellus, the Centurion, is naturally connected with the Apology of Origen, as the former declared by his actions, what the latter had affirmed in his writings, that the conſcience of a devout Chriſtian would not allow him to bear arms, even at the command of his Sovereign. I had repreſented this religious ſcruple as *one* of the motives which provoked Marcellus, on the day of a public feſtival, to throw away the enſigns of his office; and I preſumed to obſerve, that ſuch an act of deſertion would have been puniſhed in any government according to martial or even civil law. Dr. Chelſum [a] very *bluntly*

[a] Chelſum, p. 114—117.

accuſes

accuſes me of miſrepreſenting the ſtory, and of ſuppreſſing thoſe circumſtances which would have defended the Centurion from the unjuſt imputation thrown by me upon his conduct. The diſpute between the Advocate for Marcellus and myſelf, lies in a very narrow compaſs; as the whole evidence is compriſed in a ſhort, ſimple, and, I believe, authentic narrative.

1. In another place I obſerved, and even preſſed the obſervation, "that the innumerable Deities and rites of Polytheiſm were "cloſely interwoven with every circumſtance "of buſineſs or pleaſure, of public or of private "life;" and I had particularly ſpecified how much the Roman diſcipline was connected with the national ſuperſtition. A ſolemn oath of fidelity was repeated every year in the name of the Gods and of the genius of the Emperor, public and daily ſacrifices were performed at the head of the camp, the legionary was continually tempted, or rather compelled, to join in the idolatrous worſhip of his fellow-ſoldiers, and had not any ſcruples been entertained of the lawfulneſs of war, it is not eaſy to underſtand how any ſerious Chriſtian could inliſt under a banner which has been juſtly termed the *rival of the Croſs*. "Vexilla æmula Chriſti." (Tertullian de Corona Militis, c. xi.) With regard to the ſoldiers, who before their converſion

were already engaged in the military life, fear, habit, ignorance, neceſſity might bend them to ſome acts of occaſional conformity; and as long as they abſtained from abſolute and intentional idolatry, their behaviour was excuſed by the indulgent, and cenſured by the more rigid caſuiſts. (See the whole Treatiſe *De Corona Militis.*) We are ignorant of the adventures and character of the Centurion Marcellus, how long he had conciliated the profeſſion of arms and of the Goſpel, whether he was only a Catechumen, or whether he was initiated by the Sacrament of Baptiſm. We are likewiſe at a loſs to aſcertain the particular act of idolatry which ſo ſuddenly and ſo forcibly provoked his pious indignation. As he declared his faith in the midſt of a public entertainment given on the birth-day of Galerius, he muſt have been ſtartled by ſome of the ſacred and convivial rites (Convivia iſta profana reputans) of prayers, or vows, or libations, or, perhaps, by the offenſive circumſtance of eating the meats which had been offered to the idols. But the ſcruples of Marcellus were not confined to theſe accidental impurities; they evidently reached the eſſential duties of his profeſſion; and when before the tribunal of the magiſtrates, he avowed his faith at the hazard of his life, the Centurion declared, as his cool and determined perſuaſion, that it does not become

become a Chriſtian man, who is the ſoldier of the Lord Chriſt, to bear arms for any object of earthly concern. "Non enim decebat "Chriſtianum hominem moleſtiis ſecularibus "militare, qui Chriſto Domino militat." A formal declaration, which clearly diſengages from each other the different queſtions of war and idolatry. With regard to both theſe queſtions, as they were underſtood by the primitive Chriſtians, I wiſh to refer the Reader to the ſentiments and authorities of Mr. Moyle, a bold and ingenious critic, who read the Fathers as their judge, and not as their ſlave, and who has refuted, with the moſt patient candour, all that learned prejudice could ſuggeſt in favour of the ſilly ſtory of the Thundering Legion. (See Moyle's Works, Vol. ii. p. 84—88. 111—116. 163—212. 298—302. 327—341.) And here let me add, that the paſſage of Origen, who in the name of his brethren diſclaims the duty of military ſervice, is underſtood by Mr. Moyle in its true and obvious ſignification.

2. I know not where Dr. Chelſum has imbibed the principles of logic or morality which teach him to approve the conduct of Marcellus, who threw down his rod, his belt, and his arms, at the head of the legion, and publicly renounced the military ſervice, *at the very time* when he found himſelf obliged to offer ſacrifice.

crifice. Yet ſurely this is a very falſe notion of the condition and duties of a Roman Centurion. Marcellus was bound, by a ſolemn oath, to ſerve with fidelity till he ſhould be regularly diſcharged; and according to the ſentiments which Dr. Chelſum aſcribes to him, he was not releaſed from his oath by any miſtaken opinion of the unlawfulneſs of war. I would propoſe it as a caſe of conſcience to any philoſopher, or even to any caſuiſt in Europe, Whether a particular order, which cannot be reconciled with virtue or piety, diſſolves the ties of a general and lawful obligation? And whether, if they had been conſulted by the Chriſtian Centurion, they would not have directed him to increaſe his diligence in the execution of his military functions, to refuſe to yield to any act of idolatry, and patiently to expect the conſequences of ſuch a refuſal? But, inſtead of obeying the mild and moderate dictates of religion, inſtead of diſtinguiſhing between the duties of the ſoldier and of the Chriſtian, Marcellus, with imprudent zeal, ruſhed forwards to ſeize the crown of martyrdom. He might have privately confeſſed himſelf guilty to the tribune or præfect under whom he ſerved: he choſe on the day of a public feſtival to diſturb the order of the camp. He inſulted without neceſſity the religion of his Sovereign and of his country, by the epithets of contempt which

he beſtowed on the Roman Gods. "Deos "veſtros ligneos et lapideos adorare contemno, "quæ ſunt idola ſurda et muta." Nay more; at the head of the legion, and in the face of the ſtandards, the Centurion Marcellus openly renounced his allegiance to the Emperors. "Ex "hoc militare IMPERATORIBUS VESTRIS de-"ſiſto." From this moment I no longer ſerve YOUR EMPERORS, are the important words of Marcellus, which his advocate has not thought proper to tranſlate. I again make my appeal to any lawyer, to any military man, Whether, under ſuch circumſtances, the pronoun *your* has not a ſeditious, and even treaſonable, import? And whether the officer who ſhould make this declaration, and at the ſame time throw away his ſword at the head of the regiment, would not be condemned for mutiny and deſertion by any court-martial in Europe? I am the rather diſpoſed to judge favourably of the conduct of the Roman government, as I cannot diſcover any deſire to take advantage of the indiſcretion of Marcellus. The Commander of the Legion ſeemed to lament that it was not in his power to diſſemble this raſh action. After a delay of more than three months, the Centurion was examined before the Vice-præfect, his ſuperior Judge, who offered him the faireſt opportunities of explaining or qualifying his ſeditious expreſſions, and at

laſt

laſt condemned him to loſe his head; not ſimply becauſe he was a Chriſtian, but becauſe he had violated his military oath, thrown away his belt, and publicly blaſphemed the Gods and the Emperors. Perhaps the impartial reader will confirm the ſentence of the Vice-Præfect Agricolanus, "Ita ſe habent facta "Marcelli, ut hæc *diſciplinâ* debeant vindi-"cari."

Notwithſtanding the plaineſt evidence, Dr. Chelſum will not believe that either Origen in Theory, or Marcellus in Practice, could ſeriouſly object to the uſe of arms; "becauſe it is "well known, that, far from declining the bu-"ſineſs of war altogether, whole legions of "Chriſtians ſerved in the Imperial armies[s]." I have not yet diſcovered, in the Author or Authors of the Remarks, many traces of a clear and enlightened underſtanding, yet I cannot ſuppoſe them ſo deſtitute of every reaſoning principle, as to imagine that they here allude to the conduct of the Chriſtians who embraced the profeſſion of arms after their religion had obtained a public eſtabliſhment. Whole legions of Chriſtians ſerved under the banners of Conſtantine and Juſtinian, as whole regiments of Chriſtians are now inliſted in the ſervice of France or England. The repreſentation which

[s] Cheiſum, p. 113.

I had

I had given, was confined to the principles and practice of the Church of which Origen and Marcellus were members, before the ſenſe of public and private intereſt had reduced the lofty ſtandard of Evangelical perfection to the ordinary level of human nature. In thoſe primitive times, where are the Chriſtian legions that ſerved in the Imperial armies? Our Eccleſiaſtical Pompeys may ſtamp with their foot, but no armed men will ariſe out of the earth, except the ghoſts of the Thundering and the Thebæan legions; the former renowned for a Miracle, and the latter for a Martyrdom. Either the two Proteſtant Doctors muſt acquieſce under ſome imputations which are better underſtood than expreſſed, or they muſt prepare, in the full light and freedom of the eighteenth century, to undertake the defence of two obſolete legends, the leaſt abſurd of which ſtaggered the well-diſciplined credulity of a Franciſcan Friar. (See Pagi Critic. ad Annal. Baronii, A. D. 174. tom. i. p. 168.) Very different was the ſpirit and taſte of the learned and ingenuous Dr. Jortin, who, after treating the ſilly ſtory of the Thundering Legion with the contempt it deſerved, continues in the following words: "Moyle wiſhes no greater "penance to the believers of the Thundering "Legion, than that they may alſo believe "the Martyrdom of the Thebæan Legion.

"(Moyle's

" (Moyle's Works, vol. ii. p. 103): to which " good wiſh, I ſay with Le Clerc (Bibliotheque " A. et M. tom. xxvii. p. 193) AMEN.

" Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mævi."

(Jortin's Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. i. p. 367. 2d edition. London, 1767.)

Yet I ſhall not attempt to conceal a formidable army of Chriſtians and even of Martyrs, which is ready to inliſt under the banners of the confederate Doctors, if they will accept their ſervice. As a ſpecimen of the extravagant legends of the middle age, I had produced the inſtance of ten thouſand Chriſtian ſoldiers ſuppoſed to have been crucified on Mount Ararat, by the order either of Trajan or Hadrian [1]. For the mention and for the confutation of this ſtory, I had appealed to a Papiſt and a Proteſtant, to the learned Tillemont (Mem. Eccleſiaſt. tom. ii. part ii. p. 438), and to the diligent Geddes (Miſcellanies, vol. ii. p. 203), and when Tillemont was not afraid to ſay that there are few hiſtories which appear more fabulous, I was not aſhamed of diſmiſſing the *Fable* with ſilent contempt. We may trace the degrees of fiction as well as thoſe of credibility, and the impartial Critic will not place on the ſame level the baptiſm of Philip and the donation of Conſtantine. But in conſidering the crucifix-

[1] Gibbon, p. 654. Note 74.

lon of the ten thouſand Chriſtian ſoldiers, we are not reduced to the neceſſity of weighing any internal probabilities, or of diſproving any external teſtimonies. This legend, the abſurdity of which muſt ſtrike every *rational* mind, ſtands naked and unſupported by the authority of any writer who lived within a thouſand years of the age of Trajan, and has not been able to obtain the poor ſanction of the uncorrupted Martyrologies which were framed in the moſt credulous period of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. The two Proteſtant Doctors will probably reject the unſubſtantial preſent which has been offered them; yet there is one of my adverſaries, the *anonymous Gentleman*, who boldly declares himſelf the votary of the ten thouſand Martyrs, and challenges me "to diſcredit a "FACT which hitherto by many has been "looked upon as well eſtabliſhed [a]." It is pity that a prudent confeſſor did not whiſper in his ear, that, although the martyrdom of theſe military Saints, like that of the eleven thouſand Virgins, may contribute to the edification of the faithful, theſe wonderful tales ſhould not be raſhly expoſed to the jealous and inquiſitive eye of thoſe profane Critics, whoſe examination always precedes, and ſometimes checks, their Religious Aſſent.

[a] Remarks, p. 65, 66, 67.

II.

CHARACTER AND CREDIT OF EUSEBIUS.

A grave and pathetic complaint is introduced by Dr. Chelſum, into his preface [9], that Mr. Gibbon, who has often referred to the Fathers of the Church, ſeems to have entertained a general diſtruſt of thoſe reſpectable witneſſes. The Critic is ſcandalized at the epithets of ſcanty and *ſuſpicious*, which are applied to the materials of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; and if he cannot impeach the truth of the former, he cenſures in the moſt argry terms the injuſtice of the latter. He aſſumes, with peculiar zeal, the defence of Euſebius, the venerable parent of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and labours to reſcue his character from the *groſs miſrepreſentation* on which Mr. Gibbon has openly inſiſted [1]. He obſerves, as if he ſagaciouſly foreſaw the objection, "That it will not be "ſufficient here to allege a few inſtances of "apparent credulity in ſome of the Fathers, "in order to fix a general charge of *ſuſpicion* "on all." But it *may* be ſufficient to allege a clear and fundamental principle of hiſtorical as well as legal Criticiſm, that whenever we are deſtitute of the means of comparing the teſtimonies of the oppoſite parties, the evidence of *any* witneſs, however illuſtrious by his rank

9 P. ii, iii.

1 Chelſum and Randolph, p. 220—338.

and

and titles, is juſtly to be *ſuſpected* in his own cauſe. It is unfortunate enough, that I ſhould be engaged with adverſaries, whom their habits of ſtudy and converſation appear to have left in total ignorance of the principles which univerſally regulate the opinions and practice of mankind.

As the ancient world was not diſtracted by the fierce conflicts of hoſtile ſects, the free and eloquent writers of Greece and Rome had few opportunities of indulging their paſſions, or of exerciſing their impartiality in the relation of religious events. Since the origin of Theological Factions, ſome Hiſtorians, Ammianus Marcellinus, Fra-Paolo, Thuanus, Hume, and perhaps a few others, have deſerved the ſingular praiſe of holding the balance with a ſteady and equal hand. Independent and unconnected, they contemplated with the ſame indifference, the opinions and intereſts of the contending parties; or, if they were ſeriouſly attached to a particular ſyſtem, they were armed with a firm and moderate temper, which enabled them to ſuppreſs their affections, and to ſacrifice their reſentments. In this ſmall, but *venerable* Synod of Hiſtorians, Euſebius cannot claim a ſeat. I had aknowledged, and I ſtill think, that his character was leſs tinctured with credulity than that of moſt of his contemporaries; but as his

enemies muſt admit, that he was ſincere and earneſt in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſo the warmeſt of his admirers, or at leaſt of his readers, muſt diſcern, and will probably applaud, the religious zeal which diſgraces or adorns every page of his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. This laborious and uſeful work was publiſhed at a time, between the defeat of Licinius and the Council of Nice, when the reſentment of the Chriſtians was ſtill warm, and when the Pagans were aſtoniſhed and diſmayed by the recent victory and converſion of the great Conſtantine. The materials, I ſhall dare to repeat the invidious epithets of ſcanty and ſuſpicious, were extracted from the accounts which the Chriſtians themſelves had given of their *own* ſufferings, and of the cruelty of their enemies. The Pagans had ſo long and ſo contemptuouſly neglected the riſing greatneſs of the Church, that the Biſhop of Cæſarea had little either to hope or to fear from the writers of the oppoſite party; almoſt all of that *little* which did exiſt, has been accidentally loſt, or purpoſely deſtroyed; and the candid enquirer may vainly wiſh to compare with the Hiſtory of Euſebius, ſome Heathen narrative of the perſecutions of Decius and Diocletian. Under theſe circumſtances, it is the duty of an impartial judge to be counſel for the priſoner, who is incapable of making any defence for himſelf, and it is the

first office of a counsel to examine with distrust and *suspicion*, the interested evidence of the accuser. Reason justifies the suspicion, and it is confirmed by the constant experience of modern History, in almost every instance where we have an opportunity of comparing the mutual complaints and apologies of the religious factions, who have disturbed each other's happiness in this world, for the sake of securing it in the next.

As we are deprived of the means of contrasting the adverse relations of the Christians and Pagans; it is the more incumbent on us to improve the opportunities of trying the narratives of Eusebius, by the original, and sometimes occasional, testimonies of the more ancient writers of his own party. Dr. Chelsum [a] has observed, that the celebrated passage of Origen, which has so much thinned the ranks of the army of Martyrs, must be confined to the persecutions that had already happened. I cannot dispute this sagacious remark, but I shall venture to add, that this passage more immediately relates to the religious tempests which had been excited in the time and country of Origen; and still more particularly to the city of Alexandria, and to the persecution of Severus, in which young Origen successfully exhorted his father, to sacrifice his life and

[a] Gibbon, p. 653. Chelsum, p. 204—207.

fortune

fortune for the cauſe of Chriſt. From ſuch unqueſtionable evidence, I am authoriſed to conclude, that the number of holy victims who ſealed their faith with their blood, was not, on this occaſion, very conſiderable: but I cannot reconcile this fair concluſion with the poſitive declaration of Euſebius (l. vi. c. 2. p. 258), that at Alexandria, in the perſecution of Severus, an innumerable, at leaſt an indefinite multitude (μυριοι) of Chriſtians were honoured with the crown of Martyrdom. The advocates for Euſebius may exert their critical ſkill in proving that μυριοι and ολιγοι *many* and *few*, are ſynonymous and convertible terms, but they will hardly ſucceed in diminiſhing ſo palpable a contradiction, or in removing the ſuſpicion which deeply fixes itſelf on the hiſtorical character of the Biſhop of Cæſarea. This unfortunate experiment taught me to read, with becoming caution, the looſe and declamatory ſtyle which *ſeems* to magnify the multitude of Martyrs and Confeſſors, and to aggravate the nature of their ſufferings. From the ſame motives I ſelected, with careful obſervation, the more certain account of the number of perſons who actually ſuffered death in the province of Paleſtine, during the whole eight years of the laſt and moſt rigorous perſecution.

Beſides the reaſonable grounds of ſuſpicion, which ſuggeſt themſelves to every liberal mind,

againſt the credibility of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, and of Euſebius, their venerable leader, I had taken notice of two very remarkable paſſages of the Biſhop of Cæſarea. He frankly, or at leaſt indirectly, declares, that in treating of the laſt perſecution, "he has re-"lated whatever might redound to the glory, "and ſuppreſſed all that could tend to the "diſgrace, of Religion [3]." Dr. Chelſum, who, on this occaſion, moſt lamentably exclaims that we ſhould hear Euſebius, before we utterly condemn him, has provided, with the aſſiſtance of his worthy colleague, an elaborate defence for their common patron; and as if he were ſecretly conſcious of the weakneſs of the cauſe, he has contrived the reſource of intrenching himſelf in a very muddy ſoil, behind three ſeveral fortifications, which do not exactly ſupport each other. The advocate for the ſincerity of Euſebius maintains: 1ſt, That he never made ſuch a declaration: 2dly, That he had a right to make it: and, 3dly, That he did not obſerve it. Theſe ſeparate and almoſt inconſiſtent apologies, I ſhall ſeparately conſider.

1. Dr. Chelſum is at a loſs how to reconcile,——I beg pardon for weakening the force of his dogmatic ſtyle; he declares, that "It is "plainly impoſſible to reconcile the expreſs

[3] Gibbon, p. 699.

"words

" words of the charge exhibited, with any " part of either of the paſſages appealed to in " ſupport of it[4]." If he means, as I think he muſt, that the *expreſs words* of my text cannot be found in that of Euſebius, I congratulate the importance of the diſcovery. But was it poſſible? Could it be my deſign to quote the words of Euſebius, when I reduced into one ſentence the ſpirit and ſubſtance of two diffuſe and diſtinct paſſages? If I have given the true ſenſe and meaning of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian, I have diſcharged the duties of a fair Interpreter; nor ſhall I refuſe to reſt the proof of my fidelity on the tranſlation of thoſe two paſſages of Euſebius, which Dr. Chelſum produces in his favour[5]. " But it is not our " part to deſcribe the ſad calamities which at " laſt befel them (the *Chriſtians*), ſince it does " not agree with our plan to relate their diſ- " ſentions and wickedneſs before the perſecu- " tion; on which account we have determined " to relate nothing more concerning them than " may ſerve to juſtify the Divine Judgment. " We therefore have not been induced to " make mention either of thoſe who were " tempted in the perſecution, or of thoſe who " made utter ſhipwreck of their ſalvation, and " who were ſunk of their own accord in the

[4] Chelſum, p. 232. [5] P. 228. 231.

" depths

depths of the ſtorm; but ſhall only add "thoſe things to our General Hiſtory, which "may in the firſt place be profitable to our-"ſelves, and afterwards to poſterity." In the other paſſage, Euſebius, after mentioning the diſſentions of the Confeſſors among themſelves, again declares that it is his intention to paſs over all theſe things. "Whatſoever things, "(continues the Hiſtorian, in the words of "the Apoſtle, who was recommending the "practice of virtue) whatſoever things are "honeſt, whatſoever things are of good re-"port, if there be any virtue, and if there be "any praiſe; theſe things Euſebius thinks "moſt ſuitable to a Hiſtory of Martyrs;" of *wonderful* Martyrs, is the ſplendid epithet which Dr. Chelſum had not thought proper to tranſlate. I ſhould betray a very mean opinion of the judgment and candour of my readers, if I added a ſingle reflection on the clear and obvious tendency of the two paſſages of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian. I ſhall only obſerve, that the Biſhop of Cæſarea ſeems to have claimed a privilege of a ſtill more dangerous and extenſive nature. In one of the moſt learned and elaborate works that antiquity has left us, the Thirty-ſecond Chapter of the Twelfth Book of his Evangelical Preparation bears for its title this ſcandalous Propoſition, "How it may be "lawful and fitting to uſe falſehood as a me-

" dicine, and for the benefit of thoſe who want " to be deceived." Οτι δεησει ποτε τῳ ψευδει αυτι φαρμακω χρησθαι επι ωφελεια των δεομενων τε τοιυτυ τροπυ. (P. 356, Edit. Græc. Rob. Stephani, Paris 1544.) In this chapter he alleges a paſſage of Plato, which approves the occaſional practice of pious and ſalutary frauds; nor is Euſebius aſhamed to juſtify the ſentiments of the Athenian philoſopher by the example of the ſacred writers of the Old Teſtament.

2. I had contented myſelf with obſerving, that Euſebius had violated one of the fundamental laws of hiſtory, *Ne quid veri dicere non audeat*; nor could I imagine, if the *fact* was allowed, that any queſtion could poſſibly ariſe upon the matter of *right*. I was indeed miſtaken; and I now begin to underſtand why I have given ſo little ſatisfaction to Dr. Chelſum, and to other critics of the ſame complexion, as our ideas of the duties and the privileges of an hiſtorian appear to be ſo widely different. It is alleged, that " every writer has a right to " chuſe his ſubject, for the particular benefit " of his reader; that he has explained his own " plan conſiſtently; that he conſiders himſelf, " according to it, not as a complete hiſtorian " of the times, but rather as a *didactic* writer, " whoſe main object is to make his work, like " the Scriptures themſelves, PROFITABLE FOR " DOCTRINE;

" DOCTRINE; that, as he treats only of the af-
" fairs of the Church, the plan is at leaſt ex-
" cuſable, perhaps peculiarly proper; and that
" he has conformed himſelf to the principal
" duty of an hiſtorian, while, according to his
" immediate deſign, he has not particularly
" related any of the tranſactions which could
" tend to the diſgrace of religion [6]." The hiſtorian muſt indeed be generous, who will conceal, by his own diſgrace, that of his country, or of his religion. Whatever ſubject he has choſen, whatever perſons he introduces, he owes to himſelf, to the preſent age, and to poſterity, a juſt and perfect delineation of all that may be praiſed, of all that may be excuſed, and of all that muſt be cenſured. If he fails in the diſcharge of his important office, he partially violates the ſacred obligations of truth, and diſappoints his readers of the inſtruction which they might have derived from a fair parallel of the vices and virtues of the moſt illuſtrious characters. Herodotus might range without controul in the ſpacious walks of the Greek and Barbaric domain, and Thucydides might confine his ſteps to the narrow path of the Peloponneſian war; but thoſe hiſtorians would never have deſerved the eſteem of poſterity, if they had deſignedly ſuppreſſed or tran-

[6] Chelſum, p. 229, 230, 231.

ſiently mentioned thoſe facts which could tend to the diſgrace of Greece or of Athens. Theſe unalterable dictates of conſcience and reaſon have been *ſeldom* queſtioned, though they have been ſeldom obſerved; and we muſt ſincerely join in the honeſt complaint of Melchior Canus, "that the lives of the philoſophers have "been compoſed by Laertius, and thoſe of "the Cæſars by Suetonius, with a much "ſtricter and more ſevere regard for hiſtoric "truth, than can be found in the lives of "ſaints and martyrs, as they are deſcribed by "Catholic writers." (See Loci Communes, l. xi. p. 650, apud Clericum, Epiſtol. Critic. v. p. 136.) And yet the partial repreſentation of truth is of far more pernicious conſequence in eccleſiaſtical, than in civil, hiſtory. If Laertius had concealed the defects of Plato, or if Suetonius had diſguiſed the vices of Auguſtus, we ſhould have been deprived of the knowledge of ſome curious, and perhaps inſtructive, facts, and our idea of thoſe celebrated men might have been more favourable than they deſerved; but I cannot diſcover any practical inconveniencies which could have been the reſult of our ignorance. But if Euſebius had fairly and circumſtantially related the ſcandalous diſſentions of the Confeſſors; if he had ſhewn that their virtues were tinctured with pride and obſtinacy, and that their lively faith was not

exempt from ſome mixture of enthuſiaſm; he would have armed his readers againſt the exceſſive veneration for thoſe holy men, which imperceptibly degenerated into religious worſhip. The ſucceſs of theſe *didactic* hiſtories, by concealing or palliating every circumſtance of human infirmity, was one of the moſt efficacious means of conſecrating the memory, the bones, and the writings of the ſaints of the prevailing party; and a great part of the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome may fairly be aſcribed to this criminal diſſimulation of the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians. As a Proteſtant Divine, Dr. Chelſum muſt abhor theſe corruptions; but as a Chriſtian, he ſhould be careful leſt his apology for the prudent choice of Euſebius ſhould fix an indirect cenſure on the unreſerved ſincerity of the four Evangeliſts. Inſtead of confining their narrative to thoſe things which are virtuous and of good report, inſtead of following the plan which is here recommended as *peculiarly proper* for the affairs of the Church, the inſpired writers have thought it their duty to relate the moſt minute circumſtances of the fall of St. Peter, without conſidering whether the behaviour of an Apoſtle, who thrice denied his Divine Maſter, might redound to the honour, or to the diſgrace, of Chriſtianity. If Dr. Chelſum ſhould be frightened by this unexpected conſequence, if he ſhould be deſirous

of

of ſaving his faith from *utter ſhipwreck*, by throwing over-board the uſeleſs lumber of memory and reflection, I am not enough his enemy to impede the ſucceſs of his honeſt endeavours.

The didactic method of writing hiſtory was ſtill more profitably exerciſed by Euſebius in another work, which he has intitled, The Life of Conſtantine, his gracious patron and benefactor. Prieſts and poets have enjoyed in every age a privilege of flattery; but if the actions of Conſtantine are compared with the perfect idea of a royal ſaint, which, under his name, has been delineated by the zeal and gratitude of Euſebius, the moſt indulgent reader will confeſs, that when I ſtyled him a *courtly Biſhop* [7], I could only be reſtrained by my reſpect for the epiſcopal character from the uſe of a much harſher epithet. The other appellation of a *paſſionate declaimer*, which ſeems to have ſounded ſtill more offenſive in the tender ears of Dr. Chelſum [8], was not applied by me to Euſebius, but to Lactantius, or rather to the author of the hiſtorical declamation, *De mortibus perſecutorum*; and indeed it is much more properly adapted to the Rhetorician, than to the Biſhop. Each of thoſe authors was alike ſtudious of the glory of Conſtantine; but each

[7] Gibbon, p. 704. [8] Chelſum, p. 234.

of

of them directed the torrent of his invectives againſt the tyrant, whether Maxentius or Licinus, whoſe recent defeat was the actual theme of popular and Chriſtian applauſe. This ſimple obſervation may ſerve to extinguiſh a very trifling objection of my critic, That Euſebius has not repreſented the tyrant Maxentius under the character of a Perſecutor.

Without ſcrutinizing the conſiderations of intereſt which might ſupport the integrity of Baronius and Tillemont, I may fairly obſerve, that both thoſe learned Catholics have acknowledged and condemned the diſſimulation of Euſebius, which is partly denied, and partly juſtified, by my adverſary. The honourable reflection of Baronius well deſerves to be tranſcribed. "Hæc (the paſſages already quoted) "de ſuo in conſcribendâ perſecutionis hiſtoria "Euſebius; parum explens numeros ſui mu-"neris; dum perinde ac ſi panegyrim ſcribe-"ret non hiſtoriam, triumphos dumtaxat mar-"tyrum atque victorias, non autem lapſus "jacturamque fidelium poſteris ſcripturæ mo-"numentis curaret." (Baron. Annal. Eccleſiaſt. A. D. 302, N° 11. See likewiſe Tillemont, Mem. Eccleſ. tom. v. p. 62. 156; tom. vii. p. 130.) In a former inſtance, Dr. Chelſum appeared to be more credulous than a Monk: on the preſent occaſion, he has ſhewn himſelf

himſelf leſs ſincere than a Cardinal, and more obſtinate than a Janſeniſt.

3. Yet the advocate for Euſebius has ſtill another expedient in reſerve. Perhaps he made the unfortunate declaration of his partial deſign, perhaps he had a right to make it; but at leaſt his accuſer muſt admit, that he has ſaved his honour by not keeping his word; ſince I myſelf have taken notice of THE CORRUPTION OF MANNERS AND PRINCIPLES among the Chriſtians, ſo FORCIBLY LAMENTED by Euſebius[9]. He has indeed indulged himſelf in a ſtrain of *looſe* and *indefinite* cenſure, which may generally be juſt, and which cannot be perſonally offenſive, which is alike incapable of wounding or of correcting, as it ſeems to have no fixed object or certain aim. Juvenal might have read his ſatire againſt women in a circle of Roman ladies, and each of them might have liſtened with pleaſure to the amuſing deſcription of the various vices and follies, from which ſhe herſelf was ſo perfectly free. The moraliſt, the preacher, the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian, enjoy a ſtill more ample latitude of invective; and as long as they abſtain from any particular cenſure, they may ſecurely expoſe, and even exaggerate, the ſins of the multitude. The precepts of Chriſtianity ſeem to inculcate

9 Chelſum, p. 226, 227.

a ſtyle

a ſtyle of mortification, of abaſement, of ſelf-contempt; and the hypocrite who aſpires to the reputation of a ſaint, often finds it convenient to affect the language of a penitent. I ſhould doubt whether Dr. Chelſum is much acquainted with the comedies of Moliere. If he has ever read that inimitable maſter of human life, he may recollect whether Tartuffe was very much inclined to confeſs his real guilt, when he exclaimed,

Oui, mon Frere, je ſuis un mechant, un coupable;
Un malheureux pécheur, tout plein d'iniquité;
Le plus grand ſcelerat qui ait jamais été.
Chaque inſtant de ma vie eſt chargé de ſouillures,
Elle n'eſt qu'un amas de crimes et d'ordures.
. . . . . .
Oui, mon cher fils, parlez, traitez moi de perfide,
D'infame, de perdu, de voleur, d'homicide;
Accablez moi de noms encore plus deteſtés:
Je n'y contredis point, je les ai meritéz,
Et j'en veux à genoux ſouffrir l'ignominie,
Comme une honte due aux crimes de ma vie.

It is not my intention to compare the character of Tartuffe with that of Euſebius; the former pointed his invectives againſt himſelf, the latter directed them againſt the times in which he had lived; but as the prudent Biſhop of Cæſarea did not ſpecify any place or perſon for the object of his cenſure, he cannot juſtly be accuſed, even by his friends, of violating the *profitable* plan of his *didactic* hiſtory.

The extreme caution of Euſebius, who declines any mention of thoſe who were tempted and who fell during the perſecution, has countenanced a ſuſpicion that he himſelf was one of thoſe unhappy victims, and that his tenderneſs for the wounded fame of his brethren aroſe from a juſt apprehenſion of his own diſgrace. In one of my notes[1], I had obſerved, that he was charged with the guilt of ſome criminal compliances, in his own preſence, and in the Council of Tyre. I am therefore accountable for the reality only, and not for the truth, of the accuſation: but as the two Doctors, who on this occaſion unite their forces, are angry and clamorous in aſſerting the innocence of the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorian[2], I ſhall advance one ſtep farther, and ſhall maintain, that the charge againſt Euſebius, though not legally proved, is ſupported by a reaſonable ſhare of preſumptive evidence.

I have often wondered why our orthodox Divines ſhould be ſo earneſt and zealous in the defence of Euſebius; whoſe moral character cannot be preſerved, unleſs by the ſacrifice of a more illuſtrious, and, as I really believe, of a more innocent victim. Either the Biſhop of Cæſarea, on a very important occaſion, vio-

[1] Gibbon, p. 699, N. 178.

[2] Chelſum and Randolph, p. 236, 237, 238.

lated the laws of Chriſtian charity and civil juſtice, or we muſt fix a charge of calumny, almoſt of forgery, on the head of the great Athanaſius, the ſtandard-bearer of the Homooulian cauſe, and the firmeſt pillar of the Catholic faith. In the Council of Tyre, he was accuſed of murdering, or at leaſt of mutilating, a Biſhop, whom he produced at Tyre alive and unhurt (Athanaſ. tom. i. p. 783. 786.); and of ſacrilegiouſly breaking a conſecrated chalice, in a village where neither church, nor altar, nor chalice, could poſſibly have exiſted. (Athanaſ. tom. i. p. 731, 732. 802.) Notwithſtanding the cleareſt proofs of his innocence, Athanaſius was oppreſſed by the Arian faction; and Euſebius of Cæſarea, the venerable father of Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, conducted this iniquitous proſecution from a motive of perſonal enmity. (Athanaſ. tom. i. p. 728. 795. 797.) Four years afterwards, a national council of the Biſhops of Egypt, forty-nine of whom had been preſent at the Synod of Tyre, addreſſed an epiſtle or manifeſto in favour of Athanaſius to all the Biſhops of the Chriſtian world. In this epiſtle they aſſert, that ſome of the Confeſſors, who accompanied them to Tyre, had accuſed Euſebius of Cæſarea of an act relative to idolatrous ſacrifice. ἀκ Ευσεβιος ὁ τὴ Καισαρειᾳ της Παλαιστινης επι θυσιᾳ κατηγορειτο ὑπο των συν ἡμιν ὁμολογητων. (Athanaſ.

naſ. tom. i. p. 728.) Beſides this ſhort and authentic memorial, which eſcaped the knowledge or the candour of our confederate Doctors, a conſonant but more circumſtantial narrative of the accuſation of Euſebius may be found in the writings of Epiphanius (Hæreſ. lxviii. p. 723, 724.), the learned Biſhop of Salamis, who was born about the time of the Synod of Tyre. He relates, that, in one of the ſeſſions of the Council, Potamon, Biſhop of Heraclea in Egypt, addreſſed Euſebius in the following words: "How now, Euſebius, can "this be borne, that you ſhould be ſeated as "a judge, while the innocent Athanaſius "is left ſtanding as a criminal? Tell me, "continued Potamon, were we not in priſon "together during the perſecution? For my "own part, I loſt an eye for the ſake of the "truth; but I cannot diſcern that *you* have "loſt any one of your members. You bear "not any marks of your ſufferings for Jeſus "Chriſt; but here you are, full of life, and "with all the parts of your body ſound and "entire. How could you contrive to eſcape "from priſon, unleſs you ſtained your con-"ſcience, either by actual guilt or by a cri-"minal promiſe to our perſecutors?" Euſebius immediately broke up the meeting, and diſcovered by his anger, that he was confound-

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ed or provoked by the reproaches of the Confeſſor Potamon.

I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf, if I were capable of magnifying, for a preſent occaſion, the authority of the witneſs whom I have produced. Potamon was moſt aſſuredly actuated by a ſtrong prejudice againſt the perſonal enemy of his Primate; and if the tranſaction to which he alluded had been of a private and doubtful kind, I would not take any ungenerous advantage of the reſpect which my Reverend Adverſaries muſt entertain for the character of a Confeſſor. But I cannot diſtruſt the veracity of Potamon, when he confined himſelf to the aſſertion of a fact, which lay within the compaſs of his perſonal knowledge: and collateral teſtimony (See Photius, p. 296, 297.) atteſts, that Euſebius was long enough in priſon to aſſiſt his friend, the Martyr Pamphilus, in compoſing the firſt five books of his Apology for Origen. If we admit that Euſebius was impriſoned, he muſt have been diſcharged, and his diſcharge muſt have been either honourable, or criminal, or innocent. If his patience vanquiſhed the cruelty of the Tyrant's Miniſters, a ſhort relation of his own confeſſion and ſufferings would have formed an uſeful and edifying Chapter in his Didactic Hiſtory of the Perſecution of Paleſtine; and the Reader would have been ſatisfied of the veracity of an Hiſtorian who valued truth above

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his life. If it had been in his power to juſtify, or even to excuſe, the manner of his diſcharge from priſon, it was his intereſt, it was his duty, to prevent the doubts and ſuſpicions which muſt ariſe from his ſilence under theſe delicate circumſtances. Notwithſtanding theſe urgent reaſons, Euſebius has obſerved a profound, and perhaps a prudent, ſilence: though he frequently celebrates the merit and martyrdom of his friend Pamphilus (p. 371. 394. 419. 427. Edit. Cantab.), he never inſinuates that he was his companion in priſon; and while he copiouſly deſcribes the eight years perſecution in Paleſtine, he never repreſents himſelf in any other light than that of a ſpectator. Such a conduct in a Writer, who relates with a viſible ſatisfaction the honourable events of his own life, if it be not abſolutely conſidered as an evidence of conſcious guilt, muſt excite, and may juſtify, the ſuſpicions of the moſt candid Critic.

Yet the firmneſs of Dr. Randolph is not ſhaken by theſe rational ſuſpicions; and he condeſcends, in a magiſterial tone, to inform me, "That it is highly improbable, from the "general well-known deciſion of the Church "in ſuch caſes, that had his apoſtacy been "known, he would have riſen to thoſe high "honours which he attained, or been admitted "at all indeed to any other than lay-com-"munion." This weighty objection did not

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ſurpriſe me, as I had already ſeen the ſubſtance of it in the Prolegomena of Valeſius; but I ſafely diſregarded a difficulty which had not appeared of any moment to the national council of Egypt; and I ſtill think that an hundred Biſhops, with Athanaſius at their head, were as competent judges of the diſcipline of the fourth Century, as even the Lady Margaret's Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of Oxford. As a work of ſupererogation, I have conſulted, however, the Antiquities of Bingham (See l. iv. c. 3. ſ. 6, 7. vol. i. p. 144, &c. fol. edit.), and found, as I expected, that much real learning had made him cautious and modeſt. After a careful examination of the facts and authorities already known to me, and of thoſe with which I was ſupplied by the diligent Antiquarian, I am perſuaded that the theory and the practice of diſcipline were not invariably the ſame, that particular examples cannot always be reconciled with general rules, and that the ſtern laws of juſtice often yielded to motives of policy and convenience. The temper of Jerom towards thoſe whom he conſidered as Heretics, was fierce and unforgiving; yet the Dialogue of Jerom againſt the Luciferians, which I have read with infinite pleaſure (tom. ii. p. 135—147. Edit. Baſil. 1536.), is the ſeaſonable and dextrous performance of a Stateſman, who felt the expediency

diency of ſoothing and reconciling a numerous party of offenders. The moſt rigid diſcipline, with regard to the Eccleſiaſtics who had fallen in time of perſecution, is expreſſed in the 10th Canon of the Council of Nice; the moſt remarkable indulgence was ſhewn by the Fathers of the ſame Council to the *lapſed*, the degraded, the ſchiſmatic Biſhop of Lycopolis. Of the penitent ſinners, ſome might eſcape the ſhame of a public conviction or confeſſion, and others might be exempted from the rigour of clerical puniſhment. If Euſebius incurred the guilt of a ſacrilegious promiſe (for we are free to accept the milder alternative of Potamon), the proofs of this criminal tranſaction might be ſuppreſſed by the influence of money or favour; a ſeaſonable journey into Egypt might allow time for the popular rumours to ſubſide. The crime of Euſebius might be protected by the impunity of many Epiſcopal Apoſtates (See Philoſtorg. l. ii. c. 15. p. 21. Edit. Gothofred.); and the Governors of the Church very reaſonably deſired to retain in their ſervice the moſt learned Chriſtian of the Age.

Before I return theſe ſheets to the preſs, I muſt not forget an anonymous pamphlet, which, under the title of *A Few Remarks*, &c. was publiſhed againſt my Hiſtory in the courſe of the laſt ſummer. The unknown writer has thought proper

to

to diſtinguiſh himſelf by the emphatic, yet vague, appellation of A GENTLEMAN: but I muſt lament that he has not conſidered, with becoming attention, the duties of that reſpectable character. I am ignorant of the motives which can urge a man of a liberal mind, and liberal manners, to attack without provocation, and without tenderneſs, any work which may have contributed to the information, or even to the amuſement, of the Public. But I am well convinced, that the author of ſuch a work, who boldly gives his name and his labours to the world, impoſes on his adverſaries the fair and honourable obligation of encountering him in open day-light, and of ſupporting the weight of their aſſertions by the credit of their names. The effuſions of wit, or the productions of reaſon, may be accepted from a ſecret and unknown hand. The critic who attempts to injure the reputation of another, by ſtrong imputations which may poſſibly be falſe, ſhould renounce the ungenerous hope of concealing behind a maſk the vexation of diſappointment, and the guilty bluſh of detection.

After this remark, which I cannot make without ſome degree of concern, I ſhall frankly declare, that it is not my wiſh or my intention to proſecute with this *Gentleman* a literary altercation. There lies between us a broad and unfathomable gulph; and the heavy

miſt of prejudice and ſuperſtition, which has in a great meaſure been diſpelled by the free inquiries of the preſent age, ſtill continues to involve the mind of my Adverſary. He fondly embraces thoſe phantoms (for inſtance, an imaginary Pilate [1]), which can ſcarcely find a ſhelter in the gloom of an Italian convent; and the reſentment which he points againſt me, might frequently be extended to the moſt enlightened of the PROTESTANT, or, in his opinion, of the HERETICAL critics. His obſervations are divided into a number of unconnected paragraphs, each of which contains ſome quotation from my Hiſtory, and the angry, yet commonly trifling, expreſſion of his diſapprobation and diſpleaſure. Thoſe ſentiments I cannot hope to remove; and as the religious opinions of this *Gentleman* are principally founded on the infallibility of the Church [2], they are not calculated to make a very deep impreſſion on the mind of an Engliſh reader. The view of *facts* will be materially affected by the contagious influence of *doctrines*. The man who refuſes to judge of the conduct of Lewis XIV. and Charles V. towards their Proteſtant ſubjects [3], declares himſelf incapable of diſtinguiſhing the limits of perſecution and toleration. The devout Papiſt, who has implored

[1] Remarks, p. 100. [2] Id. p. 15. [3] Id. p. 111.

on his knees the interceſſion of St. Cyprian, will ſeldom preſume to examine the actions of the Saint by the rules of hiſtorical evidence and of moral propriety. Inſtead of the homely likeneſs which I had exhibited of the Biſhop of Carthage, my Adverſary has ſubſtituted a life of Cyprian [4], full of what the French call *onction*, and the Engliſh, *canting* (See Jortin's Remarks, Vol. ii. p. 239.): to which I can only reply, that thoſe who are diſſatisfied with the principles of Moſheim and Le Clerc, *muſt* view with eyes very different from mine, the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of the third century.

It would be an *endleſs* diſcuſſion (*endleſs* in every ſenſe of the word), were I to examine the cavils which ſtart up and expire in every page of this criticiſm, on the inexhauſtible topic of opinions, characters, and intentions. Moſt of the inſtances which are here produced, are of ſo brittle a ſubſtance that they fall in pieces as ſoon as they are touched: and I ſearched for ſome time before I was able to diſcover an example of ſome moment where the *Gentleman* had fairly ſtaked his veracity againſt ſome poſitive fact aſſerted in the Two laſt Chapters of my Hiſtory. At laſt I perceived that he has abſolutely denied [5] that any thing can be gathered from the Epiſtles of St. Cyprian, or from

[4] Remarks, p. 72—88. [5] Id. p. 90, 91.

his treatiſe *De Unitate Eccleſiæ*, to which I had referred, to juſtify my account of the ſpiritual pride and licentious manners of ſome of the Confeſſors [6]. As the *numbers* of the Epiſtles are not the ſame in the edition of Pamelius and in that of Fell, the Critic may be excuſed for miſtaking my quotations, if he will acknowledge that he was ignorant of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and that he never heard of the troubles excited by the ſpiritual pride of the Confeſſors, who uſurped the privilege of giving letters of communion to penitent ſinners. But my reference to the treatiſe *De Unitate Eccleſiæ* was clear and direct; the treatiſe itſelf contains only ten pages, and the following words might be diſtinctly read by any perſon who underſtood the Latin language. "Nec quiſquam "miretur, dilectiſſimi fratres, etiam de confeſſo-"ribus quoſdam ad iſta procedere, inde quoque "aliquos tam nefanda tam gravia peccare. Ne-"que enim confeſſio immunem facit ab inſidiis "diaboli; aut contra tentationes, et pericula, et "incurſus atque impetus ſeculares adhuc in ſe-"culo poſitum perpetuâ ſecuritate defendit: ce-"terum nunquam in confeſſoribus, *fraudes*, et "*ſtupra*, et *adulteria* poſtmodum videremus, quæ "nunc in quibuſdam videntes ingemiſcimus et "dolemus." This formal declaration of Cyprian,

[6] Gibbon, p. 661, Note 91.

which

which is followed by ſeveral long periods of admonition and cenſure, is alone ſufficient to expoſe the ſcandalous vices of ſome of the Confeſſors, and the diſingenuous behaviour of my concealed adverſary.

After this example, which I have fairly choſen as one of the moſt ſpecious and important of his objections, the candid Reader would excuſe me, if from this moment I declined *the Gentleman's* acquaintance. But as two topics have occurred, which are intimately connected with the ſubject of the preceding ſheets, I have inſerted each of them in its proper place, as the concluſion of the fourth article of my anſwers to Mr. Davis, and of the firſt article of my reply to the confederate Doctors, Chelſum and Randolph.

It is not without ſome mixture of mortification and regret, that I now look back on the number of hours which I have conſumed, and the number of pages which I have filled, in vindicating my literary and moral character from the charge of wilful *Miſrepreſentations*, groſs *Errors*, and ſervile *Plagiariſms*. I cannot derive any triumph or conſolation from the occaſional advantages which I may have gained over three adverſaries, whom it is impoſſible for me to conſider as objects either of terror or of eſteem. The ſpirit of reſentment, and every

every other lively ſenſation, have long ſince been extinguiſhed; and the pen would long ſince have dropped from my weary hand, had I not been ſupported in the execution of this ungrateful taſk, by the conſciouſneſs, or at leaſt by the opinion, that I was diſcharging a debt of honour to the Public and to myſelf. I am impatient to diſmiſs, and to diſmiſs FOR EVER, this odious controverſy, with the ſucceſs of which I cannot ſurely be elated; and I have only to requeſt, that, as ſoon as my Readers are convinced of my innocence, they would forget my Vindication.

Bentinck-Street,
February 3, 1779.

FINIS.

N. B. If any ſlips of the pen, or errors of the preſs, ſhould ſtill remain in this *ſecond* Edition, I muſt make my appeal, not to the candour of my Adverſaries, but to the indulgence of the Public.

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